No. 17

FOR READERS OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS
AND PLAYERS OF *'CALL OF CTHULHU'*

90p

DAGON

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE CTHULHU MYTHOS AND THE OCCULT

"THERE EXIST OTHER THAN DIMENSIONS OUR OWN...
DIMENSIONS INHABITED BY CREATURES OF MADNESS AND TERROR, WHO WAIT READY TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE EARTH!"
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MANY OF THESE CREATURES SHOP AT...

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Questions relating to THE RED BRAIN'S TRUST column should be sent to the *Dagon* address until further notice, as Peter Jeffery will be moving house in the near future.

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Editorial

I was asked a peculiar question on the telephone this morning...
"Is the *Necronomicon* real?"
I replied, saying, that of course, it was a fictional prop devised by Lovecraft to lend a pseudo-authenticity to his tales and that there *was not* a tome with that eldritch name. But once I had put the phone down, I realised that there *has* been a *Necronomicon*. In fact, there have been several.
I am referring to those pseudo-*Necronomicons* compiled by writers such as L. Sprague de Camp and George Hay. These books have managed to create a certain amount of confusion in Lovecraft fandom, mainly amongst those new to Lovecraft study, who, having read such tales as "The Festival", "The Dunwich Horror" and "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" assume the *Necronomicon* to be a fictional prop but change their minds when faced with adverts in various magazines proclaiming that the same tome is now available in paperback.
However, there are another crowd still who are convinced that the *Necronomicon was not* a figment of Lovecraft's imagination. That the tome was for real and that Lovecraft's references to the book of Alhazred were results of the author receiving dream-messages from dark forces, existing outside our plane of existence. These same writers claim that Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos pantheon are for real and wait outside the *real* world for *when the stars are right...*
The world of the occult covers a vast potpourri of phenomena; astrology, theosophy, prophecy, demonology... the list is quite endless.
The Cthulhu Mythos often relied on such unscientific ideology to establish a common core to which readers could identify. Practically every element of the occult has been utilised by Mythos writers in an attempt to mystify and terrify its audience. At times, authors have drawn upon factual(?) lore and legend to lend credibility to their tales, sometimes with deliberate intent to confuse their readers. Such stories have been known to succeed with remarkable effect.
Occultists have picked up on the Lovecraft Mythos and utilised it to their own ends. The Church of Satan, for instance, have had two rituals based on Lovecraftian lore, published in Anton LaVey's *The Satanic Rituals*. Do these people really believe that Cthulhu et al actually exist?
This issue attempts to trace the extents to which Lovecraft incorporated *real* occult lore in his fiction. Leigh Blackmore supplies us with a very thorough essay which traces the history of how the various occult circles have treated Lovecraft. Mark Valentine, a learned scholar on the works of Arthur Machen a one-time member of the Golden Dawn, shows how Lovecraft borrowed from Machen's own supernatural tales and added to his shaping of the Cthulhu Mythos. "The Dreams in the Witch-House" was one of Lovecraft's most direct attempts at writing a tale about the occult, Will Murray, a leading Lovecraftian in the US suggests that HPL's character, Brown Jenkin, was, in fact, based on a real-life creature. We also have an essay by Steve Nichols, a member of a leading British occult circle, who puts the case forward that Lovecraft may have borrowed from real sources for his usage of occult terminology and ideas. And Robert Price supplies us with an piece which concentrates on Lovecraft's use of theosophy. Along with all that, we have the usual columns... Peter Jeffery's "RBT" follows the occult theme, whilst Richard Watts supplies further dark revelations from the notes of Professor Davreau. On the fictional front we have Brian Lumley's "Shadow Man", which I doubt more than a handful of readers would have seen before and the first of a series of tales from Des Lewis which tell of a warped community living in Surrey.

See you at the next Sabbat,

Carl T. Ford.

Crawling at you

DARK DOINGS DOWN UNDER

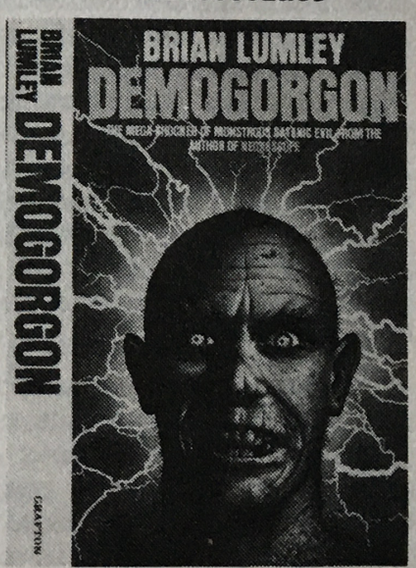
Chaosium have just released their Australian adventure pack entitled *Terror Australis*. Within its 136 pages are three lengthy adventures, which comprise of "Pride of Yirrimburra", "Old Fellow That Bunyip" — both written by Penny Love and Mark Morrison and "City Beneath the Sands", the missing section from Chaosium's *Masks of Nyarlathotep*, written by Lynn Willis and Larry DiTillio. I haven't yet read any of the adventures, since I would really like to participate in them, so readers will have to check them out for themselves. The book also supports a large introduction to the Australian culture and includes several legends and mysteries which certainly provide plenty of ideas for the Keeper should he wish to write a few of his own. The book sadly lacks the artist skills of Tom Sullivan (except one or two pieces originally submitted for *Masks*) but Tom does provide a nice cover painting. The book carries a $17.95 cover price, which I guess will place the supplement in the £12-£14 bracket.

BLURB WITH NO MEANING

Brian Lumley isn't too happy with the back cover blurb given to push his new novel *Demogorgon*, released this month from Grafton. Apparently the publishers have seen fit to advertise the book as a novel which concentrates on the sordid sex urges of a demon. Brian has supplied the following "replacement" and urges readers to ignore the official blurb — from which he wishes to disassociate himself entirely:-

"Charlie Trace is a conman and a thief. He doesn't know it but he may also be a child of the devil. When a religious organisation attempts to draw him into its confidence he is bewildered, but evidence for the existence of the antichrist accumulates and Trace eventually falls to the wiles of a beautiful Israeli girl. From then on the horrific incidents fall thick and fast on the gory trail which will lead Trace to a final confrontation with DEMOGORGON."

Readers who enjoyed Lumley's *Necroscope* should enjoy this.



Whilst on the subject of Lumley books, *The Compleat Crow* is on its way any time now. The collection is published by Paul Ganley's Weirdbook Press and reprints all the tales featuring Lumley's psychic detective, Titus Crow that have appeared in the short story collections from Arkham House, *Weirdbook* and *Kadath* as well as providing a new tale which supplies us with Crow's origin. The book is illustrated by the great Steve Fabian and will be available in three states; Signed slipcased edition, hardback and paperback. I'm sure THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND will carry copies for readers who might face difficulty in obtaining them.

ELDRITCH HORRORS FROM CARSON

DAGON PRESS is pleased to announce the first of its special publishing projects. A new portfolio of original artwork from master of the macabre, Dave Carson. The portfolio will be a collection of pen drawings illustrating several Mythos monstrosities. So far the project is half complete and carries the working title

(Continued on page 26)

H.P. LOVECRAFT AS "OCCULTIST" AN EXPLORATION

by Leigh Blackmore

Lovecraft's fiction is filled with arcane lore of an occult nature, some of it invented and some of it lifted from books on the subject that Lovecraft had read. One only has to think of such tales as "The Festival" with its bizarre Yuletide ceremony beneath the town of Kingsport; of "The Dreams in the Witch-House" with the otherworldly figures of Keziah Mason and her rat-like familiar, Brown Jenkin; of "The Horror at Red Hook" with its cult of worshippers of outre gods; or of "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" with its debased cult-group The Esoteric Order of Dagon, to realise that Lovecraft's fiction is riddled with the idea of occult practices. In "The Call of Cthulhu" various sects and individual dabblers with the occult are represented as being in contact through dream visions with elder forces that want to dominate Earth again; in tale after tale there appear references to obscure tomes of occult lore (especially Lovecraft's greatest invention, *The Necronomicon* by the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred), rituals evoking the Old Ones, hints that man is not alone in the cosmos and other trappings of occultism derived from sources as divergent as Witchcraft, Theosophy, Satanism and the works of Charles Fort. Yet there is clear evidence that Lovecraft used these references only to enhance his fiction, as a convincing literary device to lend colour and conviction to his horror tales.

It is hardly surprising that many modern occultists, unfamiliar with Lovecraft's letters (where he speaks in his own voice and reveals himself as a mechanistic materialist) have seized on these references and hints to support their own contentions that Lovecraft somehow knew more than he let on — that perhaps he was speaking truths which he veiled in the form of fiction — even that he was personally involved with occult rituals and had some sort of "inside knowledge" of real mystical forces. It is the views of these modern occultists that I want to survey here, contrasting them with a more realistic view of Lovecraft (as drawn from his own correspondence) as a believer in neither conventional or unconventional religions. After all, it was Lovecraft who engaged in one of the most intelligent and systematic debunkings of astrology ever published,[1] and who collaborated with the exposer of fake spirit mediums, Harry Houdini, on a book entitled *The Cancer of Superstition*.[2]

This exploration consists of three main sections. The first two will deal chronologically with various of the writings by occultists which perceive Lovecraft as one who prefigured their own views about mystical matters. The final section will attempt to place some perspective upon these writings and explain Lovecraft's deeply-held philosophical beliefs, which are very different from the interpretation placed upon them in those writings.

One of the earliest examples of the suggestion that Lovecraft knew cosmic secrets revealed only to an elite few occurs in a letter from Frenchman Jacques Bergier to *Weird Tales* in September 1937 shortly after Lovecraft's death.[3] After praising Lovecraft's tales and stating "I believe that Lovecraft was one of America's greatest writers, an equal to Poe", Bergier concludes with this sentence: "And in spite of — or perhaps because of — my scientific training I sometimes think that perhaps Lovecraft had a glimpse across 'undreamable abysses', of facts about the structure of the universe that science will one day discover...".

Bergier was an unusual character who was instrumental in presenting Lovecraft's work to the French public. He claimed to have corresponded with Lovecraft, though no evidence of this has ever been unearthed and the likelihood seems to be that this was total fantasy on Bergier's part. Likewise, his belief that Lovecraft had

somehow guessed, or been granted a vision of deep cosmic truths became more and more prevalent in his later writings on unusual and paranormal phenomena.

In 1949, Lovecraft's erstwhile collaborator E. Hoffman Price wrote an atrological analysis of his friend, "Lovecraft and the Stars"[4]. Lovecraft had completed a tale based on a 6,000 word sketch by Price, "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" published in *Weird Tales* for July 1934. The story is heavily laced with Eastern mysticism, which was Price's speciality, and involves travel into hyperdimensional space, concepts of reincarnation and the concept that personality has multiple existences through past, present and future. It was an entertaining yarn in which Lovecraft even worked himself in as 'Ward Phillips', an aged and eccentric mystic from Providence. But where Price took such notions as reincarnation quite seriously, Lovecraft indulged in them only for the sake of the story. He would have turned in his grave at Prices's suggestion in "Lovecraft and the Stars" that "HPL may in his next incarnation be born under other signs"[5]. Price was a professional astrologer for part of his life but it is incredible that, having worked so closely with Lovecraft, he could write an article Lovecraft would have received with scorn had he been alive to see it.

Jacques Bergier wrote essays on Lovecraft in 1954 and 1955 which appeared in French collections of Lovecraft's fiction[6]. In 1960 he published a book which was to have an enormous influence in popularising the occult[7]. *The Morning of the Magicians* co-authored with Louis Pauwels, became a massive bestseller, posing questions (mainly unanswered) about what secret and pervasive forces might be influencing our civilisation. The book ranged over a wide plethora of theories from the possibility of life on other planets, occult forces in Hitler's Germany, the idea that human mutants may exist among us who are as different from men as men are from the apes, the possibility that humanity is evolving towards some kind of superman, and so Lovecraft's name is dropped into the text here and there, without specific detail, in such a way as to suggest that Lovecraft believed in such theories. For instance, "the works of Charles Fort have been a direct source of inspiration for the greatest poet and champion of the theory of parallel universes, H.P. Lovecraft..."[8] and "We must also beware of the notion of the 'Unknown Supermen'. It is found in all the 'black' mystical writings both in the West and the East ... Whether in the form of giants ... or of shapeless and terrifying beings such as Lovecraft describes, do these 'Unknown Supermen' evoked in pagan and Satanic rites, actually exist? ... We believe that these societies ... are manifestations ... of a world other than the one in which we live".[9]

In the first quote, it is implied that Lovecraft, who certainly wrote about parallel universes in his fiction championed this theory in reality. This is far from the truth. Admittedly Bergier and Pauwels do not state outright that Lovecraft believed in such possibilities, but the placing of his name in such a context would tend to make the reader think so [10]

Likewise, the mention of Lovecraft in the second quotation in connection with the authors' discussion of Illuminati-style secret societies seems calculated to associate Lovecraft in the reader's mind with other writers who claim to have knowledge of the inner workings of these mysterious groups.

In a later book, *The Planet of Impossible Possibilities*, published in 1968, Lovecraft is 'quoted' at the head of a chapter 'Giants in the Universe: The Quasars'.[11] The brief 'quotation' reads "beyond the active radiation of our imagination". However this is a most un-Lovecraftian combination of words and I have been unable to trace the phrase in any of Lovecraft's work. It may be another example of Bergier inventing a Lovecraftian connection with his own work where none exists. Again, the phrase, fairly neautral in itself, is positioned in such a way as to make it appear that Lovecraft wrote extensively in mystical terms about the phenomena Bergier is discussing. It is an attempt to baffle readers into respect

for his theories, for Lovecraft was not widely read at the time except on an 'underground' level; Bergier must have known the old students' trick of quoting a bogus authority to shore up a shakey arguement. Pauwels and Bergier went on to write other books including *The Eternal Man* (1972) which advances a Von-Daniken-like theory that advanced civilisations existed in the past, but thankfully none of these later works seem to mention Lovecraft. (However, I believe Lovecraft is mentioned in a couple of foreign-language articles or books by Bergier in the mid-seventies; no doubt these contain more of the same)[12]

The paperback boon of the seventies saw Lovecraft widely reprinted, and with this growing accessibility of his fiction, more occultists jumped on the Lovecraft bandwagon, twisting his ingenious invented characters, settings and fictional ideas to their hardly-less-fictional occultist ends. A heady mix of Lovecraft-inspired books and articles appeared, not least of which was a flock of pseudo-*Necronomicons*. To some extent the seriously-intentioned ideas fed off the parodic, and vice-versa, with fact and fiction becoming increasingly difficult to separate.

Behind the scenes, as it were, during the whole decade are the writings of Kenneth Grant, a tantric occultist and disciple of Crowley who heads the current O.T.O. magical order in England. Nearly all of his works mention Lovecraft. His initial foray into using Lovecraft's work as a basis for his own occult theories was his essay "The Dreaming Out of Space"[13] which suggests that Lovecraft's mythcycle may have not been entirely fictional. Unfortunately I have been unable to consult a copy of this article — indeed only one book of Grant's has been made readily available to me (reportedly all copies of his books have been stolen from the major university libraries in Sydney, and they are currently out of print). In *Outside the Great Circles of Time* (1980), Grant summarises the main thesis of the article — that "in some previous existence, Lovecraft was well-acquainted with the *Necronomicon* and ... the nightmares from which he suffered came, as he himself suspected, as a result of crimes perpetrated in a former incarnation in which he practised black and abysmal sorceries"[14]

The following year, the first part of his so-called 'Typhonian Trilogy' was published — a work entitled *The Magical Revival*[15]. Again I must quote from a secondary source to give some idea of the contents. According to the recently-published *The Devil's Bookshelf*, Grant "points out that the parallels between Lovecraft's images and the symbols used by the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley. Grant sees the *Necronomicon* as corresponding to Crowley's *Book of the Law*".[16] It is undoubtedly due to the influence of these and later works by Grant that one can trace the persistent baseless rumours that, for instance, Lovecraft knew Crowley, or (heard more recently from someone unacquainted with the basic facts of either Crowley's or Lovecraft's life) that Lovecraft's grandfather was a disciple of Crowley and Lovecraft's lifelong interest in the outre is directly attributable to that alleged connection. (In fact there is no record that Lovecraft's grandfather was a Crowley devotee is likewise without a shred of evidence).

In September of 1972 Anton LaVey, founder of the first Church of Satan, published a follow-up to his mass-market bestseller *The Satanic Bible*. The new book was called *The Satanic Rituals*[17] and contains an essay, "The Metaphysics of Lovecraft" (to all appearances written by LaVey) as a preface to two rituals which draw on Lovecraftian characters and place-names "The Ceremony of the Nine Angels" and "The Call to Cthulhu". The book as a whole is a collection of occult ceremonies which are more or less genuine in that they have at one time or another been used by serious practising occultists. The Lovecraftian rituals, however, although some use seems to have been made of them by LaVey and his associates, are 'ringins' in that they were written especially for the book. The alert reader may detect a slightly tongue-in-cheek approach, yet there is enough subtle implication in the opening essay to make less-informed readers wonder as to how much Lovecraft

really knew of occult lore: "Assuming that Lovecraft was an advocate of Satanic immorality, what might have been the content of the ritual observances in Innsmouth, R'lyeh, or Leng? In his work he only goes as far as an occasional lurid line from some 'nameless rite' or 'unspeakable orgy' ... Perhaps he thought understatement to be more effective in freeing the imaginations of his readers, but clearly, he had been influenced by very real sources. Whether his sources of inspiration were consciously recognised and admitted or were remarkable 'psychic' absorption, one can only speculate. There is no doubt that Lovecraft was aware of rites not quite 'nameless', or as the allusions in his stories are often *identical* to actual ceremonial procedures and nomenclature, especially to those practiced and advanced around the turn of the last century."[18] The writer asserts that the translation of the rituals (from a Lovecraftian pseudo-alien tongue into English) are "as accurate as contemporary methods permit".[19] The whole suggestion here is that Lovecraft may not have admitted his inside knowledge, even to himself, but may well have possessed an instinctive insight into occult 'truths'. Poor Lovecraft is left little defence against these generalisations — who, after all, could stand up to suggestions that he possessed knowledge by 'remarkable psychic absorption'. This is a convenient way for the writer to ignore the real facts, as evidence does *not* point towards Lovecraft's passive acceptance of the beliefs put forward in the occult sources that he consulted for his tales.

The essay is not unintelligent, however, and contains some good points. For instance, the writer admits "The concept of worship *per se* is strikingly absent from the Cthulhu Mythos. Nyarlathotep, Shub-Niggurath, Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu are all honoured through bizarre festivals, but their relationship to their followers is invariably that of teacher to students ... Lovecraft recorded his aversion to conventional religious dogma in "The Silver Key", and he regarded with similar scorn those who, rejecting religion, succumbed to a controvercial substitute, ie the popular notion of witchcraft...". Despite these accurate observations, the writer chooses to align Lovecraft's views with his own in a roundabout fashion, maintaining that Lovecraft "sensed man's drive toward knowledge, even at the risk of sanity. Intellectual excellence, he seemed to say, is achieved in concert with cataclysmic terror ... This theme ... is the key stone of the doctrines of Satanism".[20]

We will return to the *Satanic Rituals* material shortly. But the next item to appear was an article in a mildly sensationalistic early-seventies magazine called *Witch*. Alex Sanders, well-known English wiccan, served as editorial advisor on the magazine, and the first issue includes items such as the prediction 'Prince Charles Will Marry an American!'. Also included is the first excerpt from what is portentously referred to as "The Banned Book of the Dead" — the *Necronominon* (sic) which is obviously inspired by Lovecraft's fictional creation the *Necronomicon*. Here, as so often throughout the seventies, the implication is that the work is a genuine occult artefact. "The *Necronomicon* by Hamat'at, is the most feared and revered book in the history of Witchcraft. Hand-written by an allegedly insane Arab priest who discovered the original manuscript after defiling a 3,000-year-old tomb, the *Necronomicon* consists entirely of the secret rites used by ancient Egyptian priests for raising the dead and breathing the Spirit of Immortality into their souls. For nearly six hundred years the *Necronomicon* has left a trail of death and destruction in its wake ... The Editors of *Witch* have obtained the sixth and final copy. This book has never before been published ... until now, in *Witch*!"[21] There follows seven pages of alleged manuscript reproductions, all of which deal with Egyptian magical lore in the fashion of the typical medieval grimoire. The feeble nature of the material is hardly equal to Lovecraft's conception of a volume so terrible that those who read it would go mad — but more objectionable is the blatant plagiarism of Lovecraft's idea (particularly the

amusing *History of the Necronomicon* he penned to lend pseudo-authenticity to his rare and terrible volume) and the attempt to pass it off as genuine. Certainly this does no credit to serious occultists, if such there be.

Also in 1973 appeared the first of a number of books purporting to be the actual *Necronomicon*.[22] This was the one most patently intended as an in-joke for Lovecraft devotees, and contained a text entirely in (allegedly) Duriac script. Supposedly it had been unearthed by a science-fiction writer L. Sprague de Camp on a trip through the middle east; he furnishes the introduction. In fact, the contents are meaningless, being the same few pages (done by an artist in imitation of Arabic) repeated over and over again throughout the book. (Two years later, de Camp published his biography of Lovecraft, which remains the sole full-length biography to date).

Around the same time, Kenneth Grant published Volume Two of his "Typhonian Trilogy"[23] building on the foundation laid down in *The Magical Revival* and again using Lovecraft as an example of an occult visionary.

In 1974, Angela Errigo put forward an occultist view of Lovecraft in *Fate and Fortune* magazine,[24] with the statement that Lovecraft's "macabre stories, poems and short novels are viewed by some occultists as more than fiction, as a creative expression of certain principles and doctrines".[25] Errigo discusses Lovecraft's Dunsanian tales and the Randolph Carter sequence in some detail. "Randolph Carter in 'The Silver Key' seems more clearly to represent his creator, H.P. Lovecraft, who himself tired of demanding friendships, was bored by the commonplace and offended by the changes modernization brought about in his beloved New England towns. Like Lovecraft, Carter becomes an eccentric recluse. He withdraws from society to spend his days alone in a silent, forbidding house filled with antiquities, and devotes his time to fantasy and the study of ancient, arcane lore and ritual".

Errigo is making the fundamental error of assuming a literary character is identical with the author who invented the character. Certainly Lovecraft used autobiographical details in his stories — most writers do, no matter how heavily disguised — but to assume that his fiction is entirely based on his own personal beliefs is laughable, if only because it denies Lovecraft the creative power of imagination. What Errigo fails to recognise is Lovecraft's ability to make fantasy *seem* real, and to attribute this to his gifts as an inventive and realistic prose artist.

One of her most contentious statements is that "In his letters, Lovecraft revealed to friends that most of his stories came out of his dreams and nightmares. He believed that these were sometimes fragments of his own experiences in ancient incarnations and sometimes cases of precognition — visions of earth's future. This future, he feared, included a cosmic invasion of the old gods he wrote of so vividly in his later works". This is unadulterated claptrap, unsupportable from the abundant evidence of Lovecraft's *Selected Letters* (of which three volumes were already published when Errigo's article appeared). According to Errigo, in the story, "Through the Gates of the Silver Key", Lovecraft's description of the character Ward Phillips as 'an eccentric mystic from Providence' is "indicative of self-perception on Lovecraft's part"[26] and "Lovecraft would seem to have been expressing his own yearning to enter the realms he wrote about". Rather, it is indicative of Lovecraft's sense of humour; his tales were intended primarily as entertainment, and he often invited friends and fellow writers to contribute to the pantheon of 'gods' in the Cthulhu Mythos tales.

The article gets further from the truth as it proceeds, and Errigo's claims are more and more outlandish: "Lovecraft's frequent allusions to gates, doorways and windows as portals to different dimensions of space and time have particular

meaning for mediums, Kabbalists, witches and other occultists. Spiritualists speak of the passing over from this life to the next as passing through a door; students of the Kabbalsh learn to go through the gate to the next sphere in the universe; witches open and close gates in the magic circle and so on". After trotting out the spurious "All my stories..." quotation, Errigo makes the ridiculous assertion that "At times he discussed with friends the disturbing but unshakeable thought that his nightmares came to him as reminders and as punishment for evil he had done in his past lives. He suspected that he himself had, in earlier existances, dabbled in sinister aspects of magic".[27] Errigo sees the story "The Call of Cthulhu" as a variation on the Atlantis legend that "when Atlantis suffered catastrophe and disappeared, some of its inhabitants survived. It has been asserted that they live on in another dimension and will someday return to the world". Of *At the Mountains of Madness*, she says "It is a macabre account, yet Lovecraft provides so much detail and such a well-conceived background that the story is as believeable as certain modern theories about alien visitors to the earth". This is surely a tribute to Lovecraft's powers of invention rather than the possible verity of the modern theories about aliens!

Again, "Lovecraft, perhaps because of his apparent belief in reincarnation did not fear death... But his life was filled with terror of what he might encounter on his path to intellectual and spiritual attainment",[28] Errigo continually stretches the facts, since Lovecraft's 'apparent' belief in reincarnation is not really supported even by the slim evidence she adduces, and certainly not by the evidence of his own conversation and correspondence. The mistaken author/character identification crops up again when Errigo quotes Lovecraft's whimsical poem "To Pan", saying "Certainly he could not have told many people what he was able to write to a friend; that he had worshipped pagan gods and seen the god Pan".[29] The appearance of this article undoubtedly helped strengthen the growing fervour for interpreting Lovecraft's fictional themes as literal occult revelations.

In 1975, an interesting development occured in relation to the *Satanic Rituals* material. Rob Hollis Miller published an article, "Lovecraft and Satanism"[30] in the Lovecraftian small-press journal *Nyctalops*, in which he evaluated the rituals assuming them to be by LaVey (as indeed, most readers of *The Satanic Rituals* would have). Somewhat later, one Michael Aquino (a member of the Church of Satan whose name appears only on the dedication page in *The Satanic Rituals*), found a copy of the *Nyctalops* issue in a secondhand bookshop, read Miller's article and decided to reveal his part of the affair, in an article also published in *Nyctalops*.[31]

Aquino reveals how LaVey commissioned him to contribute some Lovecraftian rituals to the volume; how he examined Lovecraft's work and how he set out to create a Lovecraftian/non-human language "by some fairly random accordion-playing on a typewriter keyboard". Aquino's attitude was quite playful. "I was enough of a prankster to have laced the text with obscure references, hidden meanings and outright satires. A very few of these have been guessed, but a complete decoding has never been printed. Even Anton LaVey is unaware of this 'ritual behind the ritual'. Aquino compares this process to Crowley's permutations of John Dee's 'Enochian' language for use in his journal *The Equinox*. He reveals that not only did *he* write the rituals, but also the introductory essay; although LaVey made some changes, for instance "the comment ... about 'Lovecraft being aware of rites not quite "nameless"' ... was added to my text by Anton LaVey prior to the book's publication".

What Aquino goes on to say about Lovecraft's beliefs runs counter to the impression given in "The Metaphysics of Lovecraft" — "As far as I am concerned, it is an ungrounded statement. From HPL's letters and conversations we know of the impact

that his 'dream ritual' experiences exerted on his fictional themes, but nowhere is there evidence that his stories were influenced by contemporary magical societies. In fact, he was openly contemptuous of both the magical literature available in his day (see his letter to Willis Conover of 7.29.36) and individuals who avowed themselves practising magicians (letter to Emil Petaja of 3.6.35)". Aquino does suggest that "Lovecraft's prejudice in these areas derives from his contact with Harry Houdini" and that "had he taken the trouble to look beyond the books of Rohmer, Waite and Levi ... had he actually investigated the practices of the AA, the Green Pang and 14K Triads in China, or the Thule Gesellschaft of pre-Nazi Germany, his scorn for practising magicians also might have abated."[32]

Aquino's article makes it evident that he and LaVey were at odds in their occultist viewpoints. This rivalry, which eventually led to Aquino's taking over the Church of Satan and retructuring it as The Temple of Set, is dealt with in detail in Nevill Drury's recent book *The Occult Experience*.[33] Aquino goes on in the article to give a detailed breakdown of key words in his 'Lovecraftian' rituals, so that the whole may be decoded. His construction of the language was actually rather clever and well thought-out, making light-hearted use of Lovecraft's story-titles as well as occult lore and legendry. He reveals more specific instances in which LaVey tampered with his text, particularly LaVey's insertion of the phrase 'i'a S'ha-t'n/Hail Satan' at the end of both rituals. Aquino shows a good grasp of Lovecraft's cosmic pessimism and Lovecraft would probably have been amused with his use of the pseudo-authentification technique. It seems LaVey was the one who stressed the link with Satanism, whereas Aquino was concerned only to "stimulate the non-natural, creative-visualising abilities of the human mind" for those who actually took part in the rituals.[34]

More writings connecting Lovecraft with occult practice came onto the market in 1975. Kenneth Grant continued to argue that, consciously or unconsciously, Lovecraft possessed real occult knowledge in Volume Three of the 'Typhonian Trilogy', *Cults of the Shadow*,[35] another hotchpotch of magical/mystical 'analysis' expanding on Crowley's ideas. Angela Carter, now well-known for her novels of gothic eroticism produced an article on Lovecraft in a similar vein (which regrettably I have not seen)[36] Most importantly, perhaps Gerry de la Ree, a fantasy collector, published *The Occult Lovecraft*,[37] a volume whose title implies the connection between Lovecraft and the occult is an important one. But its contents belie the title; it is a collection of material by Lovecraft (previously unpublished) together with some commentaries by others. Let's look at what Lovecraft had to say in "The Cosmos and Religion": "it is simply idiosy for us in this age — to repeat the very natural mistakes of our forefathers and invent a mythical 'spiritual world' which half pervades our real substance and furnishes a basis for 'immortality'. Our modern knowledge of force and substance, and our realisation that personality in organic beings is a result of the complex arrangements of their material parts — glands, brain cells, etc — leave no room or need for the naive and ancient idea of a 'soul' or 'ka' or any other sort of double for the body which we recognise as the substance of a human creature ... Of course, all this seems shocking and bewildering to a generation naively brought up with the notion that insignificant Man is the chief concern of the cosmos, and that his acts and fate are deeply related to the governing powers of all entity. It is a frightful jolt for them to realise that mankind and the world on which he dwells are only a momentary and negligible incident in the history of vast and eternal processes which have no consciousness and no concern as to whether the human world does or doesn't exist."[38] This does not sound like the talk of a man who believes in reincarnation or other mystical theories! He goes on "So far as I can see, all non-materialistic interpretations of the cosmos are pure mythology — though the very natural and age-long holding of super-natural beliefs by the majority gives

them an emotional and aesthetic value independent of their actual baselessness. Supernatural assumptions in art — though known to be false — afford a convenient mode of emotional escape for those who feel oppressed by the rigid limitations of time, space and natural law".[39] In this last sentence the ground is cut from beneath the feet of those who would claim Lovecraft's fictional supernaturalism is based on his real beliefs.

Filling out the booklet are some inconsequential pieces including "The Horned God Lives On!" by Anthony Raven, which briefly presents Raven's contention that "Pan is alive and well! So, while H.P.L. may be correct, it is still apparent that man must satisfy his primal needs to worship the 'gods'".[40] Frank Belknap Long and Samuel Loveman, both of whom knew Lovecraft, contribute brief pieces sketching in some of the background to the writing of Lovecraft's "The Horror at Red Hook". The most revealing essays are the next two. In "The Incantation from Red Hook" (presumably extracted from a Lovecraft letter), Lovecraft explains how he came to make use of a certain incantation which features prominently in that story, and gives in full his attempted translation into English. His admissions here point out how sketchy and cursory his occult knowledge actually was: "I merely took it as I found it in a history of magic ... and tried to get as good a notion as I could of the principle words — recalling my meagre and long-ago Greek course and relying on Dr William Smith's Bible dictionary for Herbraic lore".[41] After giving his translation, he says: "And that is all I can make of the thing! However, it looks just as impressive in a story as if it meant something in particular — which no doubt it did to the naive wizards and Cabalists of the Dark Ages. As for Black Magic — I fear I'm not such an expert as you suppose! In fiction I prefer original horrors to flat transcriptions of folklore, and my knowledge of actual medieval formulae and practices is really abominably fragmentary. I've read some of A. E. Waite's and Eliphas Levi's rather dry and pompous treatises, but hardly know just how one would start an informal discussion on the subject — it has so many facets! Some day, though, I'll try to sketch out a few high spots in the history of sorcerous practices — though you could probably pick up more from one of Waite's books, or from a more popular treatise by the well-known Sax Rohmer (*The Romance of Sorcery* - 1914)"[42] It should be clear to all but the willfully self-deceived that Lovecraft's knowledge of the occult was rudimentary at best, and that he employed what smatterings of occult lore he could find among the books in his library only to add drama and a sense of wonder to his tales.

Raven's article "Lovecraft and Black Magic", which closes the booklet, sensibly takes the same view: "Throughout the writings of H.P. Lovecraft there lies a terrifying undercurrent of Gothic horror. However, on closer examination we find that, in the main, the creatures, rituals and folk-lore used were of H.P.L's own creation and not drawn from some archaic legends of past civilisations and races. We do find an occasional reference to various standard books on pagan religions and witchcraft such as Maragaret Murray's *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* and Frazer's *The Golden Bough* in his tales. But other than fragmentary bits and pieces he did not utilise the traditional material from such works in his writings. Lovecraft was utterly fascinated with the possibility of strange suspensions of natural laws — glimpses of Elder Worlds and abnormal dimesnions — faint scratchings from the unknown abysses in the rim of the cosmos. Hence, this was the theme in his tales — 'creating' the myths as he went, tossing in a scrap or two of ancient lore — names — facts — places — all to put the seal of authenticity on his 'folk-lore'. A job artistically done, as many a poor soul swallowed much of his 'myth' as fact, and went off in frantic quests for a copy of the dreaded *Necronomicon*!"[43]

Of the works that Lovecraft used as sources, Raven says; "I must admit that I

get the feeling that he did not 'read' these works thoroughly but merely skimmed through them. Otherwise, he would have had a full understanding of the 'incantation' he used in "The Horror at Red Hook" and would not have spent such a great deal of time in an attempt to translate it".[44] He also points out an important error in one of Lovecraft's other 'occult' references in the same tale; the character Suydam "is quoted as babbling of unlimited powers almost within his grasp — 'And to repeat with knowing leers such mystical words or names as 'Sephiroth', 'Ashmodai', and 'Samael'". Though the latter two are names of demons, Raven points out "it is unlikely that (Suydam) would refer to 'Sephiroth', the Splendid Lights of the Cabala, since this signifies the ten emanations of God, and one cannot believe that such an evil blasphemer as Suydam could also believe in the God of Christianity ... This again fortifies my theory that in his 'research' on occultism and black magic, HPL skimmed through his reference books, selecting 'fragments' and 'words' that appealed to him".[45]

Raven mentions the well-known fact that Lovecraft (writing to Clark Ashton Smith in California on October 9, 1925 mentioning his new tale "The Horror at Red Hook") "claimed he bedecked his tale with incantations copied from the 'magic' article in the ninth edition of the *Britannica*, but went on to say he wished he could draw from less obvious sources, and asked Smith if he could suggest any good works on magic and dark mysteries which might furnish him with fitting ideas and formulae".[46] A further quotation from the same letter, not given by Raven, is worth giving here, in that it further illuminates Lovecraft's attitude toward the occult: "I've never read any of the jargon of formal 'occultism', since I have always thought that weird writing is more effective if it avoids the hackneyed superstitions and popular cult formulae. I am, indeed, without a shred of credence in any form of supernaturalism — religion, spiritualism, transcendentalism, metempsychosis, or immortality. It may be, though, that I could get the germs of some good ideas from the current patter of the psychic lunatic fringe; & I have frequently thought of getting some of the junk sold at an occultists book shop in 46th St. The trouble is that it costs too damn much for me in my present state. How much is the brochure you have been reading? If any of these crack-brained cults have free booklets and 'literature' with sugestive subject matter, I wouldn't mind having my name on their 'sucker lists'. The idea that black magic exists in secret today, or that hellish antique rites still survive in obscurity, is one that I have used and shall use again".[47]

1975 was a big year for Lovecraft and occultism. It also saw the release in America of Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson's *Illuminatus!* trilogy[48], which *Playboy* aptly described as "a cross between a literary acid trip and a political tour de farce". If Lovecraft riddled his horror tales with outre references to gods, strange places and weird ceremonies, *Illuminatus!* is riddled to an even greater extent with references to Lovecraft's characters and place-names. Characters constantly throw in mentions of The Yellow Sign, Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Tsathoggua, the Starry Wisdom Sect, shoggoths, Lloigors and so on. *Illuminatus!* is a widely improbable mixture of occult tradition, political conspiracy and general zaniness, which drags in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and Crowley along with Lovecraft; reality and invention are mixed with admirable zeal. Though such an approach is an entertaining send-up of the extremes to which conspiracy theorists go, even this novel sequence could provide further fodder for the gullible were they to take it literally.

For instance, consider the following passage: "In Brooklyn, New York, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, returning from a party at which Hart Crane had been perfectly beastly — thereby confirming Mr Lovecraft's prejudice against homosexuals — finds a letter in his mail-box and reads with some amusement — 'Some of the secrets revealed in your recent stories would be better kept out of the light of

print. Believe me, I speak as a friend, but there are those who would prefer such half-forgotten lore to remain in its present obscurity, and they are formidable enemies for any man. Remember what happened to Ambrose Bierce..." [49] The Crane/Lovecraft meeting really took place, but the letter, with its sinister suggestions that Lovecraft fictionalised real occult secrets, is pure Shea/Wilson Discordian invention.

Incident is piled upon incident in the novels, and the dropping of so many names produces a cumulative effect of pseudo-authenticity, even when the facts are twisted for effect, as in the following: "'And Arthur Machen' Mavis added. 'And Lovecraft. But they had to write in code. Even so, Lovecraft went too far, mentioning the *Necronomicon* by name. That's why he died so suddenly when he was only forty-seven. And his literary executor August Derleth, was persuaded to insert a note in every edition of Lovecraft's works, claiming that the *Necronomicon* doesn't exist and was just part of Lovecraft's fantasy'.
'And the *lloigor*?' Saul asked. 'And the *dols*?'
'Real', Mavis said. 'All real'". [50]

There is no firm evidence to support the connection, but one can't help wondering whether Shea and Wilson hadn't read Grant's books; or indeed, whether Kenneth Grant wasn't further inspired by literal reading of *Illuminatus!* In his dubious quest to link Lovecraft's life and work to his (Grant's) pet occult theories. The resemblance between *Illuminatus!* and Grant's writings is remarkable, save that Grant's is put forward seriously.

In the second volume of *Illuminatus!* Lovecraft appears in a very funny three-page scene where the links between fantasy and reality in Lovecraft's stories are parodied. Lovecraft is virtually made to confess here to watering down real occult facts to use in his tales: "You can't imagine the hours I have spent with those odd volumes at Miskatonic — wading through tomes of trash — Alhazred and Levi and Von Junzt were all mental cases, you know — to sift out the notions that were unfamiliar enough to cause a genuine shock, and a real shudder, in my readers". [51] If the approach to *Illuminatus!* were not so transparently tongue-in-cheek, Shea and Wilson may well have convinced many more readers that Lovecraft knew more about the 'cosmic truths' than he let on.

In a later article, [52] Wilson makes the following comments on the technique used in *Illuminatus!*: "More subtly, my typical structure — which I call guerilla ontology — is designed to keep the reader guessing about what is real and what isn't. That derives partly from Borges, of course, and from Joyce, and from my classes in semantics and perception psychology when I was at college; but it all started when I was thirteen and reading HPL. The 'classical' Lovecraft booklist, in which real works like *The Golden Bough* are cited side-by-side with the *Necronomicon* is the germ out of which I devised the labyrinthine puzzles which have caused so many readers to ask me with painful sincerity, 'hey, really, how much of that stuff is a put-on?' My answer is always a deliberate ambiguity since, unlike HPL, I am not satisfied to scare my readers, nor am I satisfied to make them laugh. I am trying to arouse their curisosity to a pitch that will intrigue them into such dangerous hobbies as undertaking original research and starting to think for themselves". [53]

While all this was going on in the United States, In Europe H.R. Giger and J.J. Wittmer were making a 40-minute 16mm film which surveyed Giger's artwork from 1972-75. They chose to call it "Giger's *Necronomicon*"; in this way the artist was paying homage to Lovecraft, whose work he admired greatly. Since his artwork is overtly occultist in nature, Giger's professions of admiration for Lovecraft have added yet another tinge of occultism to Lovecraft by association.

Notes

1 The series of articles from *The (Providence) Evening News* in 1914 consists of a number of essays defending astrology by J.F. Hartmann together with Lovecraft's rebuttals to them. The essays were collected by S.T. Joshi and Scott Connors under the title *Science Versus Charlatanry* (Madison WI: The Strange Company, 1979).

2 Never completed, due to Houdini's sudden illness and death; the finished portion appears in *The Dark Brotherhood and Other Pieces* by H.P. Lovecraft and Divers Hands (Sauk City, W.I: Arkham House, 1966) pp.246-261.

3 Reprinted in S.T. Joshi & Marc A Michaud (eds) *H. P. Lovecraft in "The Eyrie"* (West Warwick, RI: Necronomicon Press, 1979) p.67.

4 In *The Arkham Sampler* 2, No.2 (Spring 1949) pp.27-32.

5 Ibid, p.32.

6 "H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937)" in *La Couleur tombee du ciel* (Paris: Editions Denoel, 1954) and "Lovecraft, ce grand genie venu d'ailleurs" in *Demons et Merveilles* (edited by Louis Pauwels; Paris: Deux Rives, 1955).

7 Pauwels, Louis and Jacques Bergier. *Le Matin de Magiciens*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1960. London: Anthony Gibbs and Phillips, 1963 (as *The Dawn of Magic*) Toronto: S.J. Reginald Saunders, 1964 (as *The Morning of the Magicians*) New York: Stein and Day, 1964 (as *The Morning of the Magicians*) St. Albans, Eng: Panther Books, 1964, 1967, 1969 (as *The Dawn of Magic*) New York: Avon Books, 1968 (3rd printing 1972) (as *The Morning of the Magicians*) London: Mayflower Books, 1971 (as *The Morning of the Magicians*).

8 See Panther 1969 printing, pp.104.

9 See Panther 1969 printing, p.148, 151.

10 For a balanced and objective view of Fort's influence upon Lovecraft, see George Wetzel "The Mechanistic-Supernatural of Lovecraft" (*Fresco 8*, No.3), (spring 1958) pp.54-60.

11 Pauwels, Louis and Jacques Bergier. *Der Planet der unmoglichen Moglichkeiten* (Bern and Munich: Scherz Verlag, 1968) New York: Stein and Day 1971 (as *The Planet of the Impossible Possibilities*) St Albans, Eng: Mayflower Books, 1974 (as *Impossible Possibilities*) and 1980 (as *The Planet of the Impossible Possibilities*).

12 Bergier, Jacques "Mysteries in Overloed" *Bres* No.38 (Dec 1972-Jan 1973) pp.54-71; *Los Libros Candenados* (Bercelona; Plaza & Jares, 1976).

13 Grant, Kenneth. "The Dreaming Out of Space", *Man, Myth and Magic: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Supernatural*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1970. XXIII, pp.3214-15.

14 Grant, Kenneth. *Outside the Circles of Time*. London: Frederic Muller, 1980. p.169. Thanks to Jon Marshall for allowing me access to his copy of the book for the purposes of this article.

15 Grant, Kenneth. *The Magical Revival*. London: Frederick Muller, 1972, pp.114-17.

16 McIntosh, Christopher. *The Devil's Bookshelf: A History of the Written Word in Western Magic From Ancient Egypt to the Present Day*. Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1985, p.135.

17 LaVey, Anton Szandor, *The Satanic Rituals*. New York: Avon Books, Dec 1972. (since reprinted ten or more times); Secauces, NJ: University Books, n.d.)

18 Ibid, p.177.

19 Ibid, p.178.

20 Ibid, p.176.

21 *Witch* #1 (1973?) This first issue is undated and I have seen no later issue. It presumably appeared prior to 1974, for on p.14 there appears an article referring to Issac Bonewits having gained his B.A. for studies in magic at the University of California. Bonewits' book *Real Magic* was published in 1974 in Sphere Books' "Dennis Wheatley's Library of the Occult" series. Thanks to Jock McKenna for providing a copy of *Witch* #1.

22 Alhazred, Abdul. *Al Azif (The Necronomicon)*. Philadelphia: Owlswick Press, 1973. Limited to 348 copies. For an excellent survey of the various *Necronomicons* which space limitations permit me to mention only briefly in this article, see Robert M. Price's "Hexes and Hoaxes: The Curious Career of Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*"(*Twilight Zone 4*, #5 (Nov/Dec 1984), pp.59-65),

23 Grant, Kenneth. *Aleister Crowley & The Hidden God*. London: Frederick Muller 1973.

24 Errigo, Angela M. "The Haunted Dreamer". *Fate and Fortune* #6 (1974), pp.44-48.

25 Ibid, p.44.

26 Ibid, p.45.

27 Ibid, p.46.

28 Ibid, p.48.

29 Ibid, p.46.

30 Miller, Rob Hollis. "Lovecraft and Satanism". *Nyctalops 2*, #3 (whole no. 10) Jan/Feb 1975), pp.9-11, 43.

31 Aquino, Michael a. "Lovecraftian Ritual: Ceremony of the Nine Angles/The Call to Cthulhu". *Nyctalops* #13 (May 1977), pp.13-15.

32 Drury, Nevill. *The Occult Experience*. Sydney: Fontana Books, 1985, pp.106-122. Aquino seems to have written of Lovecraft in the Church of Satan newsletter *The Cloven Hoof* (not seen by me): "Return to R'lyeh", *Cloven Hoof 5*, #4 (July/August 1973), pp.12-15 though listed as unsigned in the standard Lovecraft bibliography by S.T. Joshi, the piece is almost certainly Aquino's work; and Aquino mentions in passing in his *Nyctalops* article a piece called "Genesis II", *Cloven Hoof* (1972).

33 Cf. Drury's statement of Michael Aquino's philosophy (*Occult Experience*, p.115): "Those who have explored the many different branches of self-development in the Human Potential movement will recognise here the self-actualising philosophy served up in a different form".

34 Grant, Kenneth. *Cults of the Shadow*. London: Frederick Muller 1975.

35 Angela Carter. "The Hidden Child". *New Society*, #648 (6 March 1975) pp.595-96.

36 Lovecraft, H.P. *The Occult Lovecraft*. Saddle River, NJ: Gerry de la Ree, 1975.

37 Ibid, p.8.

38 Ibid, p.10.

39 Ibid, p.18.

40 Ibid, p.23-24.

41 Ibid, p.30.

42 Ibid, p.31.

43 Ibid, p.32.

44 Ibid, p.39.

45 Ibid, p.40.

46 Lovecraft, H.P. *Selected Letters II* (1925-1927) Edited by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, Sauk City, Wisc: Arkham House 1968 p.27.

47 Shea, Robert & Robert Anton Wilson. *Illuminatus!* Part I: The Eye in the Pyramid, Part II: The Golden Apple, Part III: Leviathan. New York: Bell Books 1975; London: Sphere Books 1976 & 1977 (since reprinted many times).

48 "The Eye in the Pyramid" (Sphere) p.184.

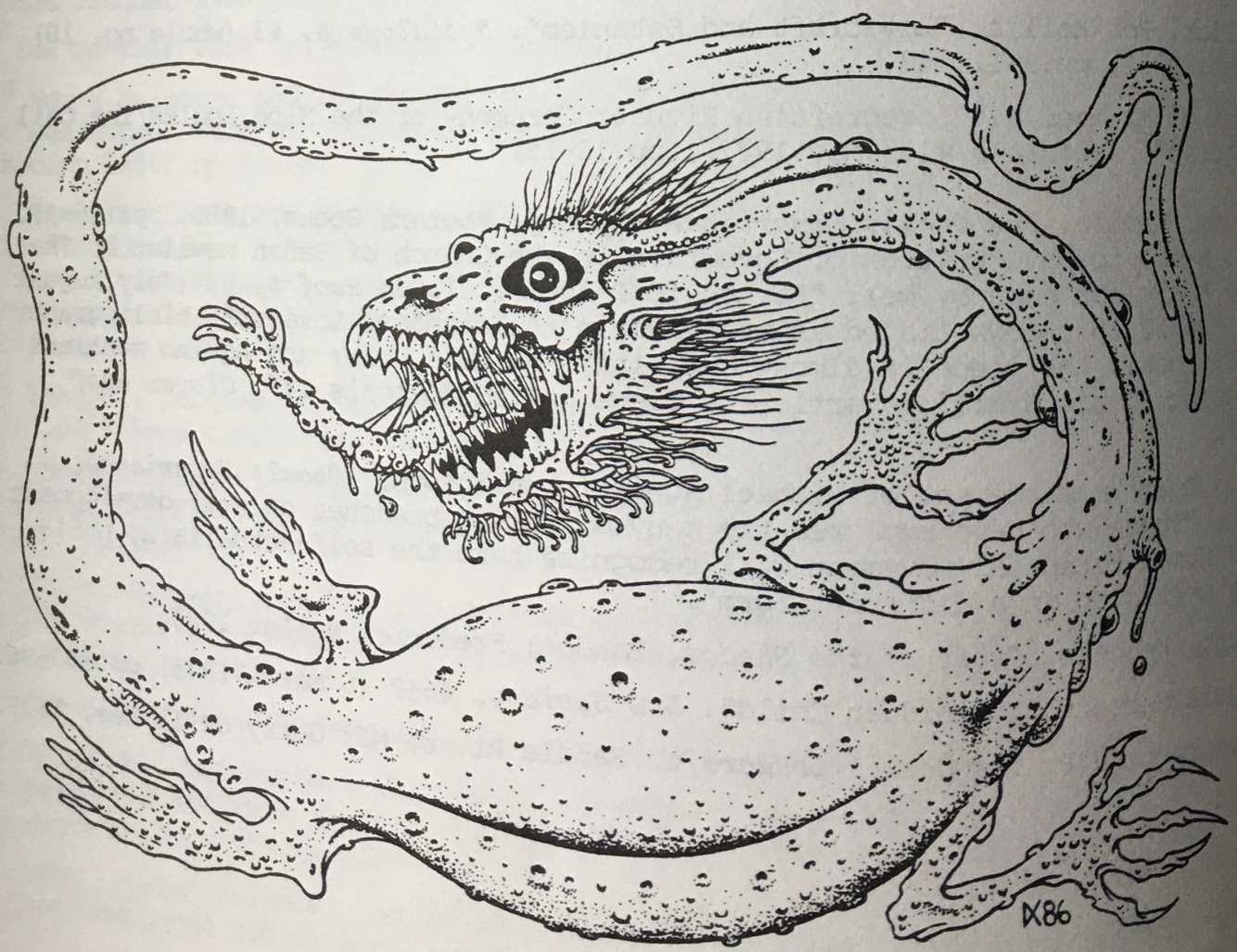
49 Ibid, p.300.

50 "The Golden Apple" (Sphere) p.39.

51 Wilson, Robert Anton. "My Dept to H.P. Lovecraft". *Crypt of Cthulhu* 2, #4 (Eastertide 1983) pp.3-4, 16.

52 Ibid, p.3.

The above article originally appeared in Shadowplay *#9 & #10, an Australian small press zine specialising in the esoteric.*



The Prophets of Pandemonium
Arthur Machen and H.P. Lovecraft

by Mark Valentine

I.

"In youth he had felt the hidden beauty and ecstacy of things, and had been a poet; but poverty and sorrow and exile had turned his gaze in darker directions, and he had thrilled at the imputations of evil in the world around ..."

Arthur Machen, only son of an impoverished Gwent clergyman, had a lonely childhood, much of which he spent roaming the black woods, deep lanes and legend-haunted hills around his home town of Caerleon, itself steeped in the lost glories of the Celts and Romans. So fervent was his response to this sacred realm, Machen sought to convey its mysteries in literature, which he called "the art of exhibiting symbols which may hint at the ineffable". His first, youthful, work was a poem entitled "Elevsinia". When the time came to pursue a career, Machen's parents thought of journalism, so he left for London to learn the trade. Apart from a brief return home, he was to spend the next forty years in the capital, and the first few of these were spent living in acute poverty. Machen was both fascinated and repelled by the mingling of majesty and squalor he found in the city, and this permeates much of his work. But his thoughts were never far away from Gwent, and in the writer's attempts to evoke the primeval secrets of that region, and the labyrinthine mysteries of London, he created some of the finest fantastic literature ever; "The Great God Pan", "The Three Imposters", "The White People", "The Shining Pyramid", "The Hill of Dreams" (all written during Machen's period of peak artistry, in the 1880's and 90's). Their very names possess a strange aura, suggestive of works of high magic.

Our opening quotation, which seems to describe Machen perfectly, is in fact H. P. Lovecraft's portrait of Malone, the protagonist of his own "The Horror at Red Hook" (1925), a police detective who "... had the Celt's far vision of weird and hidden things, but the logician's quick eye for the outwardly convincing". From 1923-25[1] Lovecraft immersed himself in as much of Machen's work as he could find. The effect is not unguessable since it is enshrined in ardent tones throughout Lovecraft's celebrated essay, "Supernatural Horror in Literature", written during the period dating 1926-27. Lovecraft's library, so far as the information available shows,[2] had more Machen items than any other single writer except Lord Dunsany. Lovecraft's letters provide further testimony of his enthusiasm, and he continued this proselytizing in his own stories, several of which include allusions to Machen. Commentators since have acknowledged Machen's influence on Lovecraft as virtually self-evident. Yet, so far, there has been little attempt to explore just what form this took. In what way was Lovecraft's work changed by reading Machen? Lovecraft, himself, probably could not have said. Think of any one of your acquaintances and see if you can define exactly how your relationship has altered your thoughts and behaviour. Attempting something of this kind in literature is to be aware that much of what you are seeking to analyse happened on a subliminal level.

With this caveat in mind, we must begin by looking briefly at what Lovecraft had written before he read Machen — the period dating before 1923. The most evident feature is the use of exotic, mythological or dream-world locations; the influence of Dunsany during this period is unmistakeable. In the exceptions, New England is present only as a backdrop, and the elements of horror are not drawn from the land-

scape. In all the work, originating from this period, it is difficult to detect any recurring motif or strand of thought.

These stories are anecdotal exercises in the macabre, several of them founded on rather venerable formulae. There are some tales which may be termed proto-Mythos, but only in retrospect. It does not seem to me that Lovecraft, at this stage in his writing, had it in mind to develop these tableaux of lightly-sleeping beast gods into the great drama of the Mythos.

The first of Machen's works which Lovecraft read was "The Hill of Dreams", which S. T. Joshi has evoked as "that poignant, agonising book about a man's attempt to express the inexpressible". The tale's hero, Lucian Taylor, is an image of Machen himself, and the early chapters of this, the most sublime of the author's works, are refulgent with the wild beauty and wonder of his homeland. Lovecraft must have found the novel a potent, bewitching draught, for he soon consumed *The House of Souls*, a compendium of Machen's major horror fiction.

We may never be able to place for certain the first story Lovecraft wrote following his discovery of the Welsh prose-alchemist. Exham Priory, in "The Rats in the Walls" (1923) may owe its Romano-Celtic antecedents to the example of Machen's Caermaen in "The Hill of Dreams", and there is a scene in Lovecraft's "The Festival" (1923) where the narrator, surmounting a hill, sees Kingsport spread in hoary splendour below, which is reminiscent of a similar panorama of ancient, decayed Caermaen, experienced by Lucian Taylor. But these are tangential references only. What substantial effect did Lovecraft's imbibing of Machen's work have?

II.

"... a frightful race of dark primal beings of immemorial antiquity..."

Lovecraft conjuring up thoughts of the Great Old Ones? No. Here he is describing Machen's "Little People". And if that term puts you in mind of dainty, bewinged sprites, think again, and see for example "The Shining Pyramid", in which their appearance is "as if the sweet turf and the cleanly earth had suddenly become quickened with some foul writhing growth". This image of sentient corruption is made worse when we learn what the putrid mass of grotesque creatures is doing...

In several of his horror stories, Machen enables us to piece together the conclusion that these beings, commonly found in folklore and legend, are still among us, around us, though their world is subterranean and sustained by sorcery. The fate of mortals who fall into their — hands? — is sufficient to send shudders through the soul. Machen also presumes the living presence of immemorial pagan dieties and daemons, and in "The Great God Pan", "The Inmost Light" and "The Novel of the White Powder" we see how the rites, ceremonies and symbols of these archetypal images of evil are not to be manipulated with impurity.

The theme of a surviving, sinister, predecessor race was original to Machen, and his revelation that the old gods, and what they represent, did not die is also a powerful concept, compellingly conveyed.

These dimensions in Machen's oeuvre were seized on with relish by Lovecraft, who by vastly expanding and elaborating them created a vision which fused both ideas, the abhuman prior race, and the persistence of the ancient gods of the dark and delirious; Lovecraft's Great Old Ones are the hideous hybrid offspring of this process.

The stories which are at the heart of the Cthulhu Mythos, I suggest, have their germination in Lovecraft's reading of Machen. It is surely significant, for example, that the three textual mentions of Machen occur in what many would regard as primary Mythos tales — "The Call of Cthulhu" (1926), "The Dunwich Horror" (1928)

and "The Whisperer in Darkness" (1930) — whilst "The Strange High House in the Mist" (1926) borrows Nodens, Lord of the Great Abyss from Machen's "The Great God Pan", as one of the Elder Gods.

In "The Call of Cthulhu", the notes of a dead professor and the "queer clay bas-relief" he kept locked away, prompt his great-nephew, the narrator, to piece together the appalling truth concerning the Cthulhu Cult. In Machen's "The Novel of the Black Seal", we learn of a Professor Gregg, vanished presumed dead, who like Lovecraft's Professor Angell, has compiled notes of a highly disturbing and speculative kind, and who keeps locked away "a lump of black stone, rudely annotated with queer marks and scrathes". We are able to equate this seal with a passage by an ancient geographer, Solinus, about a race which "dwells in remote and secret places, and celebrates foul mysteries on savage hills. Nothing have they in common with men save the face, and the customs of humanity are wholly strange to them: and they hate the sun. They hiss rather than speak; their voices are harsh, and not to be heard without fear. They boast of a certain stone ... which is Ixaxar". Gregg collates instances of inexplainable deaths and disappearances, and this singular study, together with his academic knowledge of ethnology, lead him to pose the dreadful question, "... what if the obscure and horrible race of the hills still survived, still remained haunting wild places and barren hills, and now and then repeating the evil of Gothic legend, unchanged and unchangeable?"

It requires no great leap of the imagination to perceive in "The Call of Cthulhu" parallels with the "Novel of the Black Seal", though Lovecraft has naturally introduced a great number of amplifications, most notably the cosmic range of the Great Old Ones, and their influence on dreams.

Lovecraft would have also read two other tales by Machen which are of relevance in considering the origins of the Cthulhu Mythos. In "The Red Hand", a man resolves to discover a hidden treasure, "the hoarde of a race extinct for ages" of which certain legends tell. His excavations of a primordial burial mound leave him in no doubt that the legends have got it wrong in one crucial particular... He escapes with a thing of "revolting obscenity", though it is made of wrought gold; it is called the Pain of the Goat, and in the place from whence it came are those who are "little higher than the beasts" and who possess things a thousand times more evil.

In "The White People" an unknowing girl is introduced into the secret languages, shrines, dances and ceremonies of beings she calls the Nymphs, DÔls and Jeelo. It is Machen's invented Aklo language that Wilbur Whateley is taught in "The Dunwich Horror", evidence that as Lovecraft added to the Cthulhu pantheon and mythology, he still had Machen's work held firmly in his imagination.

III.

We may also see stylistic changes in Lovecraft's writing during the period dating 1926 onwards, which, whilst representing Lovecraft's growing maturity as a writer, are probably derived from his enhanced understanding of his craft, gained by reading Machen, amongst others. Simply put, the stories become longer, with more attention to scene-setting and foreshadowing, more care for detail. Robert Price has noted that "Lovecraft's characters gradually come to discover their danger by piecing together isolated scraps of knowledge" [4]. This is a technique, I suggest, derived directly from Machen who pushes it to brazen lengths in "The Great God Pan" and, especially, "The Three Imposters". He often uses a character, Dyson, who is a connoisseur of the curious, to assemble his strange mosaic.

Perhaps, most curious of all, Lovecraft begins to dwell memorably on the New England countryside, as in the romantic opening passages of "the Dunwich Horror"

and "The Colour Out of Space", mingling pure naturalistic evocation with hints and prompts as to the terrain's brooding spirit. It seems reasonable to suppose that he was so impressed with Machen's use of a living landscape itself drenched in legend and desolation that he overcame his addiction to artificial worlds, Arkham became his equivalent of Machen's Caermaen.

We may detect passing echoes of Machen's work in many of the stories Lovecraft wrote from 1923, even as late as 1933. "The Thing on the Doorstep" with its diabolic villainess, Asenath Waite, is strongly reminiscent of "The Great God Pan" in which Helen Vaughan, daughter of the demon, drives her suitors to suicide. Both female entities forms end up in horrible states; in Asenath's case as a "mostly liquescent" malodorous mass, in Helen's as a "substance like jelly" amid a stench of corruption.

There is no need to suggest conscious imitation was behind this and the other parallels between Machen and Lovecraft's work. The latter retained hsi distinctive tone and philosophical attitudes even whilst absorbing and recharging those elements in Machen he found effective and true. The vast vistas of *At the Mountains of Madness* and "The Shadow Out of Time" sway far beyond any hint of derivation.

But it is fair to give recognition where it is due and it is sadly the case that Arthur Machen's work has been neglected in a way that Lovecraft would have deplored. None of his major writing is in print in the U.K. and attention to him even amongst enthusiasts of weird fiction is surprisingly low. It is hoped that this article gives just one reason among many why this state of affairs is unjust.

It has not been possible, in this introduction to the theme of influence of Arthur Machen on H. P. Lovecraft, to explore their ideas in any great detail. Whilst on the one hand their beliefs were at opposite poles — Machen a mystic, Lovecraft a rationalist — they both possessed a strong conviction that science cannot tell us all, and pitched their artistry into the dark gulfs it leaves unknowable. From out of those beshadowed chasms there came at their call, firstly the lurking, loathsome Little People and the demiurge servants of the infernal sabbath, and then in the slime-stained wake, the star spawned amorphous ogres of even older origin, whose will it is that chaos and carnality shall one day swarm upon this world. There are no greater prophets of the essence of evil than Arthur Machen and H. P. Lovecraft.

Notes

[1] I am considerably indepted to Peter Jeffery who has compiled a scrupulously researched chronology of Lovecraft's reading of Machen. He will be writing on this theme of Machen's influence on Lovecraft for *Tales After Dark #4*. I also owe to Peter Jeffery the insight about Lovecraft's description of landscape, mentioned further on in this essay.

[2] *Lovecraft's Library: A Catalogue* by S. T. Joshi & Marc A Michaud, Necronomicon Press, 1980.

[3] *Studies in Weird Fiction #1*, p. 38.

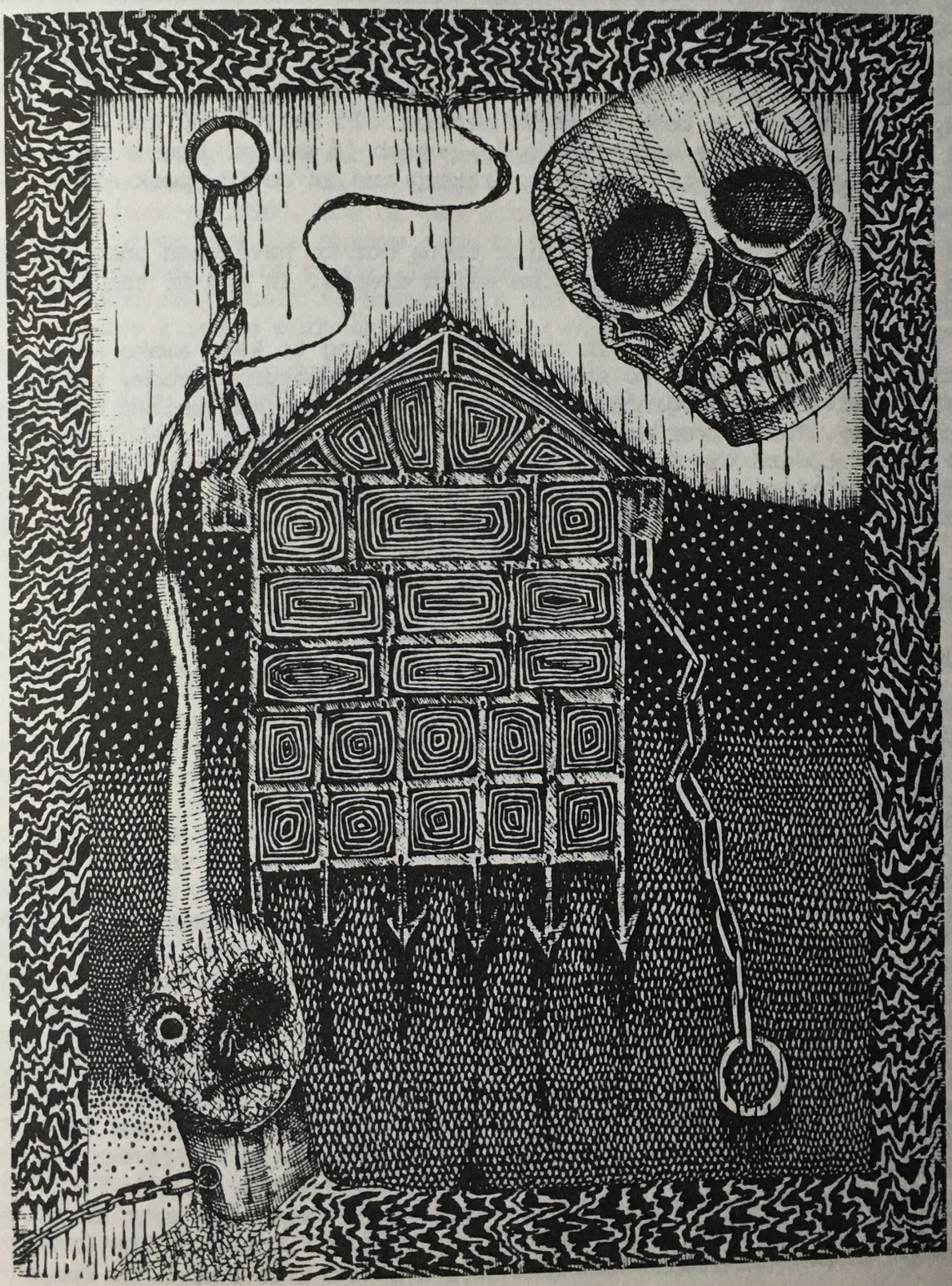
[4] *Dagon #14*, p. 3.

Addendum

Enthusiasts of the wider Mythos may like to know that the first non-Lovecraft Cthulhu tale also contains what must be taken as a tribute to Machen. The opening words of Frank Belknap Long's "The Hounds of Tindalos" (*Weird Tales*, March 1929) are; "'I'm glad you came, said Chalmers". Compare this with the first words of

Machen's "The Great God Pan" (1894); "'I'm glad you came, Clarke; very glad indeed...'" And in confirmation of this direct reference, the philosophical dialogue which follow's in Long's story, between the mystic Chalmers and the more sceptical minded narrator, has all the formula and flavour of the several similar set-piece discussions we find in Machen, for example, between the Romantic, Dyson, and the Realist, Phillips, in "The Three Imposters" (1895) or between Ambrose and Cotgrave in "The White People" (1904).

Frank Belknap Long was, of course, the author of a sonnet, "On Reading Arthur Machen", which Lovecraft reproduced in "Supernatural Horror in Literature" (1927), and in which FBL lauds Machen's evocation of "The ancient wisdom, and the ancient pain".



Was There A Real Brown Jenkin?

by Will Murray

Perhaps the most memorable character in all of H. P. Lovecraft's fiction was Brown Jenkin, the rat-like witch's familiar of "The Dreams in the Witch-House" Brown Jenkin was unlike any other of Lovecraft's creations, and certainly unlike the popular conception of the witch's familiar as a cat, and the vividness with which Lovecraft depicted him is worthy of note.

The story's hero, Walter Gilman, first hears of Brown Jenkin as the legendary companion to Keziah Mason, a supposedly deceased witch, while he is staying in Arkham, Massachusetts. Romours about Brown Jenkin continue to survive over two hundred years after Keziah's lifetime, and Gilman hears these strange reports.

> Witnesses said it had long hair and the shape of a rat, but that its sharp-toothed, bearded face was evilly human while its paws were like tiny human hands. It took messages betwixt old Keziah and the devil, and was nursed on the witch's blood — which it sucked like a vampire. Its voice was a kind of loathsome titter, and it could speak all languages.[1]

While staying in a strange room which turns out to have been once used by old Keziah Mason, Gilman experiences some weird dreams. In one of them, he sees Brown Jenkin for the first time:

> He [Gilman] would be lying in the dark fighting to keep awake when a faint lambent glow would seem to shimmer around the centuried room, shewing in a violet mist the convergence of angled planes which had seized his brain so insideously. The horror would appear to pop out of the rat-hole in the corner and patter toward him over the sagging, wide-planked floor with evil expectancy in its tiny, bearded human face — but mercifully, this dream always melted away before the object got close enough to nuzzle him. It had hellishly long, sharp, canine teeth. Gilman tried to stop up the rat-hole every day, but each night the real tenants of the partitions would gnaw away the obstruction, whatever it might be. Once he had the landlord nail tin over it, but the next night the rats gnawed a fresh hole — in making which they pushed or dragged out into the room a curious little fragment of bone.

As Gilman's dreams continue, he also encounters old Keziah, who seems to transport him through time and space to a hellish rendezvous where the witch and Brown Jenkin — whose face curiously resembles the witch's — intend to use Gilman in one of their rites.

Lovecraft wrote "The Dreams in the Witch-House" in January and February 1932, according to S. T. Joshi.[3] In his published letters in the various *Selected Letters*, HPL has little to say about this story, and he is virtually silent on the subject of Brown Jenkin. If that character had any source of inspiration other than the obvious one of the witch's familiar, Lovecraft seems never to have enlightened anyone, and his Commonplace Book contains no germinal idea out of which Brown Jenkin might have grown.

However, just a few months prior to the composition of "The Dreams in the Witch-House", something strange was happening on the Isle of Man, which was picked up by the BBC and carried over the news wires in America and which may have come to the attention of H. P. Lovecraft. This story was recounted most recently in two books by Nandor Fodor, *Haunted People* and *Between Two Worlds*. It is the tale of the "Dalby Spook", more commonly known as Gef, the Talking Mongoose, who as we'll see bears more than a passing resemblance to Brown Jenkin. It was in September 1931 (only four months before HPL began "The Dreams in the Witch-House") that Gef manifested himself, according to Fodor. It was in a farm-

stead known as Doarlish Cashen, purchased by James T. Irving in 1917, where the Irving family lived peacefully until the day noises in the attic began. At first, these sounds were animal sounds — tappings, hissings, and spittings. Gradually, they evolved into a gurgling and barking, which Irving repeated along with the sound for the word dog. To his amazement, the creature repeated the human word; whereupon Irving began to teach the unseen creature to speak. Before long, the creature was conversing intelligently and made it known that his name was Gef.

At first, Gef — who inhabited the walls of Doarlish Cashen — claimed to be "a ghost in the form of a weasel",[4] but later he merely claimed, as he put it, that "I am just an extra, extra clever little mongoose".[5] Whether he was a mongoose or not is open to question. The Irvings never saw him clearly, although he was supposedly photographed on the run, and he left behind manifestations of his presence indicating that the voice which conversed with the family, and in time became part of the family, belonged to a small animal, perhaps five inches long, who lived within the walls and attic of the farmhouse rather like a rat.

In the descriptions cited by Fodor, Gef sounds like a nonmalignant Brown Jenkin, who, like Brown Jenkin, claimed a command of many languages:

> Gef, by all accounts, is very shy and extremely nervous of the human gaze. For years he was only a voice. Those who heard it, described the voice as shrill and high-pitched, one or two octaves higher than human speech. Then the Irvings saw his shadow cast by the light of a candle, which they held up near his hiding place. The shadow was the shape of an animal which was fast adapting itself to human ways and which, instead of claws, appeared to have fingers with which he could pick up things and throw them.[6]

Further description included the fact that Gef's fingers were "short, yellow, and tha nails were curved",[7] and that he possessed three fingers and a thumb. His mouth was about an inch wide and held teeth that were "tiny and sharp".[8] When someone suggested that Gef was an Indian marsh mongoose, the voice of Gef readily agreed — he also claimed to be eighty years old, the eighth wonder of the world, the Holy Ghost, the fifth dimension, and that he could split the atom.

One of Gef's favourite expressions — which is interesting in the light of Brown Jenkin's ability to pop in and out of hyperspace — is his cry, "Vanished!" which he gave after pulling a trick or throwing an object at somone from an unseen vantage point, giving the impression that he did, in fact, vanish. Gef also liked to swear, roam the countryside unseen, and catch and kill rabbits.

At least, according to Fodor, who claimed to have investigated the case of the Talking Mongoose in the mid-thirties, all the above is true. Fodor, a psychic investigator, dismissed the possibilities that Gef was either a ghost, a poltergeist or a witch's familiar, and decided that he was most probably some kind of intelligent, talking mongoose-like animal. Whether Gef was real or not is not the subject of this article. Anyone wishing to read more about this story may refer to either of Fodor's books and decide for himself, or simply enjoy Fodor's accounts of a creature who may have never existed, but who is depicted as a fascinating, whimsical personality that probably should have existed.

What is of importance here is that in October 1931, only a month after Gef supposedly began speaking to the Irvings, the BBC carried a series of articles on this phenomenon. Eventually, the U.S. newspapers got hold of the story. It is possible that between October 1931 and January 1932 H. P. Lovecraft may have come upon an early account of Gef, and certain details of this fantastic creature became in his mind the genesis of Brown Jenkin. The striking similarities between these two very odd animals are not entirely outside the realm of coincidence, but assuming the American papers picked up on the BBC story prior to 1932, as they may well have, then the inspiration for Brown Jenkin is in all liklihood to be found on the Isle of Man.

The story of Gef continued long past Lovecraft's lifetime, however. He is alleg-

ed to have lived with the Irvings for many years, up until the time they moved from Doarlish Cashen. Some time afterward, the new tenant shot and killed a curious animal on the property which some believe was the Talking Mongoose. In "The Dreams in the Witch-House" of course, the body of Brown Jenkin is discovered in a not dissimilar manner. A case of art anticipating life, perhaps.

NOTES

1 *At the Mountains of Madness* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1986), p.266.

2 Ibid., p.268.

3 "A Chronology of Selected Works by H.P. Lovecraft", in Joshi's *Four Decades of Criticism*, p 39.

4 *Haunted People* (New York: Signet Books, 1968), p.154.

5 *Between Two Worlds* (New York: Paperback Library, 1967), p.206.

6 *Haunted People*, p.150.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

CRAWLING AT YOU

(Continued from page 5)

LOVECRAFT'S PANTHEON II — The plates will be printed on high quality art stock and presented in a lavish folder. There will also be an introduction by genre author, Ramsey Campbell. Limited to 450 signed and numbered copies, the portfolio looks to be a sell-out. Both Dave and I agree its amongst the best work he's ever produced and the portfolio will be available exclusively from *Dagon*. The price is unsettled at the moment, but I expect it will retail around the £4.50 bracket. Readers wishing to keep upto date on developments should send me an SAE to the editorial address, to ensure they don't miss out on this project.

ARCANE BOOKS FOR SALE

Simon Gosden has put together a little outfit which specialises in bringing rare and collectable fantasy items onto the British market. Actually the company not new, but it's the first chance I've had to plug the thing. Readers are advised to send for a listing of current stock (it might be an idea to enclose a SAE). Write to Simon Gosden, 25 Avondale Road, Rayleigh, Essex. Simon also edits a fanzine which prints weird fiction and articles, sometimes which concentrate on Lovecraftian matters and entitled *Out of the Woodwork*. I believe there's a new issue out now, readers sending £1 and an A5 stamped addressed envelope should ensure you secure a copy.

NEW NECRONOMICONS

And finally...I have just received copies of Necronomicon Press' new releases which include *The Real Commonplace Book*, published in 2 volumes and spans over 100 pages. This monumental work by Lovecraft recreates the notes and annotations which made up HPL's "Commonplace Book" as originally written. The book includes hundreds of plot-lines and ideas which Lovecraft never got around to writing about, some of which inspired the posthumous Derleth "collaborations". The editor and compiler, David E. Schultz provides some excellent commentary, giving us a history of HPLs ideas from conception to later publication. Copies are obtainable from DAGON PRESS for £7.50 for the 2 volumes.

Lovecraft's Use of Theosophy

by Robert M. Price

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, known to her followers as "HPB", was co-founder with Colonel Henry Steele Olcott of the Theosophical Society, a genteel and pretentious cult of the nineteenth century that survives today in several insignificant splinter-groups. Quite a dynamic and colourful figure in her day, Madame Blavatsky managed to synthesize an occult metaphysics that has fueled the imagination of generations of those who, in Ouspensky's phrase, are "in search of the miraculous". But our interest in her stems from a rather different agenda. As Lin Carter notes, "Madame Blavatsky is really quite an important personage in the history of fantasy. In the course of two interminable and all but unreadable tomes of spurious occult lore — *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* — she codified fugitive and unattached morsels of legend, theory and nonsense into a systematic prehistory of the world" including a superbly "gaudy cosmology". "This system, percolating down through sensational popularizations and Sunday supplement articles, was adopted lock, stock and barrel by writers for the fantasy pulp magazines, who are thus greatly in her dept". (Preface to Clark Ashton Smith, *Poseidonis*, p.3).

Fritz Leiber ("John Carter: Sword of Theosophy", in DeCamp (ed.), *The Spell of Conan*) traces HPB's influence on Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Lin Carter names H. P. Lovecraft as another of her deptors. Robert Turner (writing in *The Necronomicon, The Book of Dead Names*, pp. 66-67) also discerns theosophical currents in Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. HPL certainly did borrow from HPB, but to our knowledge, no one has yet demonstrated the real extent of that influence. In the present article, we will show that several obscure passages in Lovecraft's work can be elucidated by reference to the lore of Theosophy.

Encountering Theosophy

In his book *Occult Philosophy*, Marc Edmund Jones comments with some irony that despite Lovecraft's total disbelief in the occult, "His Cthulhu mythology is a complete and thoroughly rounded out job of invention, actually much more convincing than Leadbeater and Besant's presumably literal account of remote things in *Man, Whence, How and Whither* (p.89). He makes reference to Charles G. Leadbeater and Annie Besant, two of the principal leaders of Theosophy after Madame Blavatsky's death. Jones' statement is all the more ironic since HPL's "Cthulhu mythology" may be shown to derive, at least in some details, from the self-same Theosophical system.

In a letter to Clark Ashton Smith, Lovecraft reveals his acquaintance with Theosophy. "I've ... been digesting something of vast interest as background or source material — ... i.e., the Atlantis-Lemuria tales, as developed by modern occultists & the the[o]sophical charlatans ... What I have read is *The Story of Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria*, by Scott Elliott [sic]" (*Selected Letters*, vol. II, p.58). Writing to Willis Conover, Lovecraft is even more frank. "The crap of the theosophists, which falls into the class of conscious fakery, is interesting in spots" (*Lovecraft at Last*, p.33).

However, it appears that Lovecraft's explicit familiarity with Theosophy was somewhat limited. In a second letter to Smith, he mentions several new (Theosophical) mythologoumena and bemoans his ignorance of their source.

> [E. Hoffmann] Price has dug up another cycle of actual folklore involving an allegedly primordial thing called *The Book of Dzyan*, which is supposed to contain all sorts of secrets of the Elder World before the sinking of ... Atlantis ... and ...Lemuria.... It is kept at the Holy City of Shamballah, and is regarded as the oldest book in the world — its language being *Senzar* (ancestor of Sanscrit), which was brought to earth 18,000,000 years ago

by the Lords of Venus. I don't know where E. Hoffman got hold of this stuff, but it sounds damn good" (*Selected Letters*, vol. IV, p.155).

If he didn't know the origin of this material, at least he suspected, and correctly. In a letter to Price, he asks of this legend cycle, "What — if any — special cult (like the theosophists, who have concocted a picturesque tradition of Atlantean-Lemurian elder world stuff) ... cherishes it?" (*Selected Letters*, vol. IV, p.153). In a disarmingly frank statement, which we may suspect was intended as a knowing "wink" to the reader, Blavatsky herself had declared, "The reader is ... invited to regard all that which follows as a fairy tale, if he likes...." (*An Abridgement of 'The Secret Doctrine'*, p.17). Lovecraft, in effect, accepted this invitation.

The Book of Dzyan

In many of his tales, Lovecraft has a protagonist stumble upon a secret cache of musty occult books, among which are usually to be found *The Book of Eibon*, Prinn's *De Vermis Mysteriis*, D'erlette's *Cultes de Goules*, Von Junzt's *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, and of course the *Necronomicon* of Abdul Alhazred. Occasionally, there are substitutions or additions to this checklist. One such optional item is *The Book of Dzyan*. In "The Haunter of the Dark" Robert Blake finds a copy among the books in the Starry Wisdom library.

> They were the black, forbidden things which most sane people have never even heard of, or have heard of only in furtive, timorous whispers; the banned and dreaded repositories of equivocal secrets and immemorial formulae which have trickled down the stream of time from the days of man's youth, and the dim, fabulous days before man was.

The "big five" are listed. "But there were others he had known merely by reputation or not at all — the *Pnakotic Mauscripts*, the *Book of Dzyan*...." In "The Diary of Alonzo Typer", the said diarist recounts how "I learned of *The Book of Dzyan*, whose first six chapters antedate the Earth...." Lovecraft's successors continued to use the book in this kind of setting. In *The Lurker at the Threshold*, Derleth's narrator recalls that "I dipped into [the] strange and terrible pages" of the usual Mythos grimoires, plus "the *Book of Dzyan*, the *Dhol Chants*, and the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*. I read of terrible and blasphemous cults of ancient, pre-human eras...."

What was this *Book of Dzyan*? Could it live up to the shuddersome reputation thus established for it? On the very first page of *The Secret Doctrine*. Blavatsky describes it as "An ancient manuscript — a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process...." (p.1). The name itself, "Dzyan", seems to represent the Sanskrit *dhyana* ("meditation"), the root of the Chinese *Ch'an* and the Japanese *Zen*. As DeCamp says, it is pronounced something like "John". Furthermore...

> Tradition says that it was taken down in *Senzar*, the secret sacerdotal tongue, from the words of the Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the [human] race.... The old book, having described Cosmic Evolution and explained the origin of everything on earth, including physical man..., goes no further. It stops short ... just about 4989 years ago.... (*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. xliii)

More about these "Divine Beings" and "sons of Light" presently, but for now suffice it to note the close parallel between Lovecraft's reference to *Dzyan* in one of his letters quoted above, and this quote from *The Secret Doctrine*. Apparently, Price had quoted this text pretty much verbatim, as did HPL when he in turn related the material to Smith.

In fact, no such book exists. Or, one might better say, it is a pseudepigraph. Interested readers may obtain a copy of the text themselves, but its origin is

considerably more recent than that claimed for it by Madame Blavatsky. DeCamp points out the dependence of part of *Dzyan* on the *Rig Veda's* "Hymn of Creation" (*Lost Continents*, p. 60). Rene Guenon traces it to fragements of the Kanjur and Tanjur texts of Tibet (Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America*, p.129). Finally, Gershom G. Scholem makes a good case for the origin of *Dzyan* being an Aramaic kabbalistic text, the *Sifra Di-Tseniutha*, to which Blavatsky actually referred, transliterating its title as "Sifra Dzeniuta", a form even closer to "Dzyan" (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 398-399). The resultant *Book of Dzyan* or *Stanzas of Dzyan* (HPB used both titles interchangeably) was the core of the encyclopedic work *The Secret Doctrine*. The latter, in fact, purports to be but a massive commentary on the former. And though it is there made the centerpiece of a confusing jungle of obtuse speculation. the allegedly primordial text could hardly have accounted for the flabbergasted trauma of Alonzo Typer: "what I read will cloud and make horrible whatever period of life lies ahead of me".

Shamballah

In the letter quoted above, Lovecraft refers to "the Holy City of Shamballah". Despite his manifest enthusiasm for "that Dzyan-Shamballah stuff", the mystical city appears but once in his fiction. We must refer again to "The Diary of Alonzo Typer", where the narrator recounts "I learned of the city Shamballah, built by the Lemurians fifty million years ago, yet inviolate still behind its walls of psychic force in the eastern desert". The business about the Lemurians represents creative license, but the rest of the passage does stem from theosophical beliefs about the lost city.

Shamballah, the prototype for the fictional "Shangri-La", was believed by Theosophists to be "the spiritual center of the world and the original source of the secret doctrines of Theosophy" (Edwin Bernbaum, *The Way to Shamballah*, p. 20). Certain highly advanced "Masters" or "mahatmas" (notably the Tibetan supermen Kuthumi and Morya El), from whom Blavatsky, A. P. Sinnett, and other early Theosophists claimed to receive telepathic revelations, were believed to dwell there. Surely these Masters supplied the prototype for "the undying leaders of the [Cthulhu] cult in the mountains of China", mentioned in "The Call of Cthulhu" just a line or two before an explicit reference to "the speculations of theosophists".

According to indigenous Tibetan legend, Shamballah is a hidden, ageless kingdom surrounded by a ring of impenetrable mountain peaks. It is ruled by a line of righteous philosopher-kings who preserve Buddhist culture and doctrine against the day when the outside world will have sunk completely into the mire of warfare and materialism. At this time, a messianic king will lead his army forth from the hidden city to destroy the wicked and establish a golden age (Bernbaum, p.4).

Tibetans believe that Shamballah is somewhere north of Tibet, in the Kunlun Mountains, or in Mongolia, the Sinkiang Province of China, or Siberia. Others suggest the North Pole or even another planet! Historians and mythographers, on the other hand, that if the legend has any basis, Shamballah may correspond to the Tarim Basin, West Turkestan, the ancient Kushan Empire, the Greek Kingdom of Bactria, the Yarkand, Kashgar, or Khotan oases, or, finally, the old Uighur Kingdom of Khocho [= "Tcho-Tcho"?] in the Turfan Depression beneath the Tien Shan Mountains (Berbaum, p.46). Probably the most attractive guess, however, is that of Idries Shah, who believe that "it could be derived from Sham-i-Balkh, the Bactrian Sun Temple, the ruins of which can still be seen at Balkh near the northern frontier of Afghanistan" (J. G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, p.26).

What of HPL's reference to "inviolate ... walls of psychic force"? Shamballah is often represented in Tibetan Buddhist lore as a symbol for the object of spiritual quest, like "the Celestial City" in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Those who are unworthy can never find their way to Shamballah. To them, the city will remain invisible because their bad karma will "have created illusions that obscure [their]

vision and prevent them from recognizing or seeing the kingdom" (Bernbaum, p.39). Lovecraft apparently had something like this in mind.

Incidentally, quests for Shamballah were not restricted to the realm of legend. Artist and occultist Nicholas Roerich, to whose "strange and disturbing Asian paintings" HPL refers to in *At the Mountains of Madness*, undertook the journey in 1934. But he returned home empty handed. Even though Roerich had founded his own theosophical cult, the Roerich Foundation, he must not have had the spiritual wherewithal needed to penetrate that karmic curtain.

The Lords of Venus

In the same context with *The Book of Dzyan* and the lost city of Shamballah, Lovecraft makes an enigmatic reference to "the Lords of Venus". ("I'm quite on edge about that Dzyan-Shamballah stuff. The cosmic scope of it — Lords of Venus, and all that — sounds so especially and emphatically in my line!") (*Selected Letters*, vol. IV, p.153). In the letter to Smith, he says the *Senzar* language, in which *Dzyan* was written, "was brought to earth ... by the Lords of Venus". In "The Diary of Alonzo Typer", he says that *The Book of Dzyan* "was old when the lords of Venus came through space in their ships to civilize our planet". Finally, in "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" (rewritten from "Lord of Illusions" by E. Hoffmann Price, who "turned him on" to "that Dzyan-Shamballah stuff" to begin with), we read that "The Children of the Fire Mist came to Earth to teach the Elder Lore to man". These "Children of the Fire Mist" correspond to the "Lords of Venus", but all this is going to take a bit of explaining.

The basic cosmological doctrine of Theosophy is that universal history may be divided into an infinite series of *manvantaras* , or cosmic-evolutionary aeons, separated by *pralayas* , or age-long periods of dormancy. At the start of each *manvantara* , Being-itself (Brahman), symbolized as Primordial Fire, begins to differentiate itself into individual beings. The first of these are seven solar dieties, also called "Sons of the Fire Mist" because of their immediate derivation from it. (*Secret Doctrine* , vol 1, p.86). The term also refers to "a group of semi-divine and semi-human beings" who incarnate these mighty entities on earth. They "become, from the first awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early Humanity. It is through these 'Sons of God' that infant humanity got its firt notions of all the arts and sciences, as well as of spiritual knowledge" (Ibid., pp. 207, 208). "It was they who imparted Nature's most weird secrets to men, and revealed to them the ineffable, and now *lost* 'word'" (*Secret Doctrine* , vol 2, p. 220). This last is undoubtedly the "elder lore" mentioned by Lovecraft.

But where is the connection to Venus? In Scott-Elliot's *The Story of Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria* , the author, an orthodox Theosophist, explains that these primeval guides of humanity came to earth from Venus, whose cycle of evolution was advanced beyond that of earth. In fact, humanoid life on earth (on Lemuria, to be exact was barely sentient. The Venusian Lords of the Fire Mist educated humanity in the first instance by psychically occupying their bodies and, as it were, "getting them used to" housing real intelligence, which they would then begin to develop on their own, by a kind of metaphysical Lamarckianism. How could the Venusians do this? They were "endowed with the stupendous powers of transferring their consciousness from the planet Venus to this our earth" (Scott-Elliot, p. 107). The "space-ships", then, are an addition by Lovecraft, since The--osophy's Venusians had no need for them.

If HPL did not retain Scott-Elliot's idea of mind-projection across space in connection with his "Lords of Venus", he did make use of the notion elsewhere. The Great Race of Yith in "The Shadow out of Time" had projected their minds across time and space to inhabit the cone-shaped monstrositites of prehistoric Australia, much as the Theosophical Venusians had incarnated themselves in the equally repugnant Lemurians. We may strongly suspect that the whole idea of the former was der-

ived from the latter. In one letter, Lovecraft remarked, "Some of these hints about ... the shapeless monsters of archaic Lemuria are ineffably pregnant with fantastic suggestion ... " Whence these hints? "What I have read is *The Story of Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria* ...." Specifically, Lovecraft must have had in mind Scott-Elliot's reference on p.87: "Somewhat before the middle of the Lemurian period ... the gigantic gelatinous body began slowly to solidify ...." So "The Shadow out of Time"'s idea of advanced intellects from outer space teleporting to earth to inhabit primitive, gigantic, rubbery bodies seems to stem from HPL's reading of Scott-Elliot. He even supplies a fairly clear hint in this direction in that very story. As the narrator pores over ancient texts in order to reconstruct the history of the Great Race, he notices that "A few of the myths had significant connections with other cloudy legends of the prehuman world, especially those Hindu tales involving stupefying gulfs of time and forming part of the lore of modern theosophists".

From the Theosophists, too, Lovecraft seems to have derived his ubiquitous references to "cyclopean" ruins, denoting the past dominance of gigantic alien races, such as those just described. In "Out of the Eons", a "gigantic fortress of Cyclopean stone" is attributed to "the alien spawn of the dark planet Yuggoth, which had colonised the earth before the birth of terrestrial life". In "The Call of Cthulhu", Wilcox dreams of "the damp Cyclopean city of slimy green stone ... The *size* of the Old Ones [who built the city of R'lyeh], he curiously declined to mention". In *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* , Randolph Carter wonders at "the vast clay-brick ruins of a primal city whose name is not remembered". He "did not like the size and shape of the ruins .... And what the structure and proportions of the olden worshippers could have been, Carter steadily refused to conjecture".

The Theosophists were not so reticent as Wilcox and Carter, however. Madame Blavatsky declares that "cyclopean ruins and collosal stones [are] witnesses to giants .... We say that most of these stones are the relics of the last Atlanteans" (*Secret Doctrine* , vol. 2, p. 341).

Scott-Elliot attributes them to the earlier Lemurians: "They learned to build great cities. These appear to have been of cyclopean architecture, corresponding with the gigantic bodies of the race" (*The Story of Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria* , p. 101). They were between twelve and fifteen feet tall.

Versus Theosophy

Up to now we have treated Theosophy only as a source of raw materials used by Lovecraft in his fiction. But occasional references to Theosophy *per se* imply that he used the cult itself as an image of some kind. We will conclude our consideration of "Lovecraft's Use of Theosophy" with a brief survey of four such quotes. In "The Call of Cthulhu", the well-travelled sailor Castro tells what he knows of Cthulhu and the Old Ones. His story "savored of the wildest dreams of myth-maker and theosophist, and disclosed an astonishing degree of cosmic imagination...." In the same story, the narrator describes a file full of data that will eventually disclose the truth about Cthulhu. "The other manuscript papers were all brief notes ... some of them citations from theosophical books and magazines (notably W. Scott-Elliot's *Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria*)...." In "Out of the Eons", an eccentric curator is described in these terms: "A smattering of theosophical lore ... made Reynolds especially alert toward any eonian relic like the unknown mummy".

In all these instances, the implications contain a dim hint of an archaic truth terrible in its reality. It is as if to say that the Theosophists have only a small part of the truth, and that their little knowledge is an extraordinarily dangerous thing. In fact, HPL's narrator says as much in our fourth quote (again, from "The Call of Cthulhu"): "Theosophists have guessed at the awesome grandeur of the cosmic cycle wherein our world and human race form transient incidents. They have hinted at strange survivals in terms that would freeze the blood if not

masked by a bland optimism". There is, so to speak, indeed something at the end of the rainbow, only instead of a pot of gold, it is a bottomless pit. In their occultist optimism, Theosophists had postulated the ancient origin of humanity amid alien super-intelligences. So glorious an origin seemed to imply a bright destiny for the race. But Lovecraft's "cosmic futilitarianism" led him to repaint the picture in darker, pessimistic hues. As depicted in *At the Mountains of Madness*, the genesis of the human race was a breeding accident in the laboratories of the star-headed Old Ones. The resultant vision is one of absurdity. Lovecraft has represented precisely what fundamentalist "creationists" see as being at stake in their quixotic crusade against Darwinism: if man's origin was random, so is his meaning, and so will be his destiny.

The above article originally appeared in Crypt of Cthulhu *#5, Roodmas 1982.*

BLACK MAIL

(Continued from page 50)

Peter F. Jeffery, Leicester. On the subject of your article, I found it interesting, though it might have been nice if you'd done more to place the trilogy in the general context of joking between HPL & Bloch — "A Visit With H.P. Lovecraft", the more than usually light-hearted tone of Lovecraft's letters to Bloch ... & so on. No doubt this would have made the article longer than you desired — I suppose that something always has to be left out if *Dagon* is to be kept within sane limits of length. What you did cover is done thoroughly — which is, perhaps, better than attempting a larger topic & giving it only sketchy treatment.

Teresa Kerr, Paisley. Sandy Petersen and Greg Stafford should never have been let out of their strait-jackets — they are a danger to society. A close friend of impressionable mind has never been quite the same since first singing the Chattanooga-Choo-Choo rip-off in *Call of Cthulhu* and is often heard humming it. I mistakenly showed her "The Acolyte"s version of "Waltzing Matilda" & I swear she's flipped. In fact, if she sings it once more I think I'll resort to physical violence.

Brian J. Luck, London. "The Red Brain's Trust" continued excellent (sic) and I can truly say that it inspires the casual reader like myself to delve deeper into the mysteries surrounding Lovecraft and his fiction.

Peter F. Jeffery. I am afraid that I have a niggle on behalf of your illustrators. The only credits to them which I can see are those on p.44. These list five interior illustrators, but makes no attempt to indicate which illustrations are the work of which artist. This wouldn't matter so much if they were all clearly signed, but I have been unable to discover the signature of either of the full pagers, p.11 & p.32. Finding the signature on p.31 is like trying to solve a puzzle picture! I knew whose work it was from the style, & searched long for the DC amid all the graffiti — it took me ages to discover it on the tee-shirt! Don't you think that the internal illustrators deserve credit for the pages they've illustrated, just as much as the cover artists merit this kind of credit?

Mark Samuels. Phibes — yeh man — that's the guy for editor — real nice cadaverous cover. Tentacle hand McKenna goes from strength to strength, his work is starting to heh! heh! cripple Carson.

Mark Morrison. Phibes lives!!! Nice one. Backcover is one of the most effective and affecting picture's of Lovecraft I've seen — makes him look more human for a change.

Interior artwork credits for #16 were:- Steve Hatherley pp.4.5.6.19.37: L. J. Cornford p.11; Dave Carson p.31; Mick Lyons p.32; Garry Marshall pp.30,44.

Lovecraft, the Golden Dawn and Enochian Chess

by Steve Nichols

Lovecraft's fictional output is studded with references to, and themes taken from, the leading Magical Order of his era, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The question this essay addresses is the extent to which Lovecraft's knowledge of the occult was second-hand, or alternatively, I would like to consider the possibility that HPL actually was, or knew, an Initiate of the Golden Dawn.

Whatever the actual involvement of HPL himself, it is indisputable that the work carried out at the turn of the century by the G.D. forms the background for much of his literary output. Consider the following coincidences; firstly, Lovecraft's literary heroes and guides were themselves largely active *initiates* of the G.D. In his survey of contemporary notable authors of "weird fiction" in Lovecraft's essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature", he cites Algernon Blackwood and Arthur Machen as being amongst the four writers who had been his chief influences. Both were G.D. members. He goes so far as to criticise Blackwood as having "too free use of the trade jargon of modern occultism", implying an insider's knowledge of the G.D. framework. Earlier in the same essay, HPL introduces the *Book of Enoch*, and the *Claviculae of Solomon*, both of which are texts forming an important part of the G.D. system of magic, and not generally known of, at the time, outside of the cogniscenti. The plot thickens as we learn that amongst Lovecraft's other literary mentors were Robert Louis Stevenson & W.B. Yeats. Both were Golden Dawn Initiates, Yeats himself being a high Adept and leader of one of the British Temples. Sax Rohmer and Bram Stoker were also prominent members of the G.D.

There are basically two sources of Golden Dawn material which would have been available to HPL during the time of his writing. The first was Aleister Crowley's volumes of *The Equinox*, which began publication in the first decade of the century. We know for certain that the Widener Library at Harvard took delivery of Vol. I, No. 5 of *The Equinox* (March 1911), on December 31, 1917, thus placing it easily within Lovecraft's reach.

The second source of information was Regardies complete work, *The Golden Dawn*, in 4 volumes, published in 1937. Both Regardie and Crowley resided in the States at various times.

At this point in the proceedings, I must admit to a personal interest. I personally corresponded with Francis Israel Regardie for the two years before his death in 1984, on the subject of Enochian Chess. Although the topic of HPL was not raised, I have established contact with the remaining outpost of the G.D., from Europe, U.S., and Dr. Felkins' offshoot in New Zealand, and have been involved with research into the origins of the G.D. and am aware of various unpublished contemporary notebooks by original members of the G.D. I have also been involved with remnants of Crowley's O.T.O. in the States, who have recently published a compendium version of *The Equinox*.

My own company produces and distributes world-wide, *ENOCHIAN CHESS*, which incorporates knowledge to the grade of Zelator Adeptus Minor, and involves players in building Telesmatic Images of various Egyptian dieties, travelling astrally to Quabalistic realms represented by the City of Pyramids, and the four worlds represented by the Chess-boards, of Atziluth, Briah, Yetsirah and Assiah.

W.B. Yeats is documented as having spent evenings playing *Enochian Chess* with the Grand Master of the Golden Dawn, Samuel MacGregor Mathers (author of *The Sacred Magic of Abra Melin the Mage* and other works probably used by HPL as sources for his fiction). Crowley lists the attributes of Enochian Chess in *Liber 777* (a

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book he probably stole in the most part from Mathers' research), but undoubtedly Crowley would have built a set of Enochian Chess, as it was prescribed work necessary for preparation to Initiation to Zelator Adeptus Minor, and was undertaken during the stage when the candidate was known as "babe of the Abyss". Full instructions for playing Enochian Chess were not available outside the Outer Order of the G.D. itself until Regardie published his *Golden Dawn* volumes, and since members of the Golden Dawn were sworn to secrecy, there is no easy way of telling whether HPL's interest in Ceremonial Magic & the G.D. ever lead to a serious practical commitment.

There is, however, strong indication from Lovecraft's writings, that his interest was, indeed, more than cursory. For instance, in "The Thing on the Doorstep", Edward Pickman Derby, student of the occult familiar with the *Necronomicon*, marries Asenath Waite, daughter of the magician Ephraim Waite. Arthur Edward Waite in real life, was another author of books concerning Qabala, and also a prominent member of the Golden Dawn. The Waite surname appears in other stories, such as "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" and "The Shadow Over Innsmouth".

Waite, who died in 1942, was well known in both the States and Europe, and in 1898 he published *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts*. It is likely that this book was the source of HPL's information on The Keys of Soloman. Amongst G.D. Initiates, The Great Work as required by the Order was intended to raise their level of consciousness to a point in which the scheme and design of universal existence would be revealed. However, several Adepts including W.B. Yeats, were known to have a predilection for Demonology and the Goetia, so Lovecraft's rituals in the *Necronomicon* to liberate the demonic Old Ones strikes a resonance. The fact that he altered the names very slightly (e.g. Azathoth — a composite of Astaroth & possibly Thoth), was a convention adopted by other G.D. writers. Crowley's fictional work *Moonchild* also changes names in this fashion, as do Blackwood et al, so as to protect their vows of secrecy to knowledge obtained from the Golden Dawn.

Lovecraft departs from the gothic tradition, which he found too cliche ridden, and his stories are not of single ghosts contained within strict geographical parameters, such as in the British tradition of ghost stories. Rather, his work stresses the universal scale of events, and webs of evil ensnareing an individual on etheral levels such as those described by the Qabalistic system of Sephira, and linked planes of existence, and of course, the reflected demonic world of the Qlippoth. One only has to examine HPL's use of sounds to detect the 'barborous words of Evocation' taught by the G.D., and the use of vibratory words of power in such thinly disguised names as Nyarlathotep, Cthulhu, etc, taken from Egyptian diety names, for instance, Tharpeshest, Tmoumathph, and Kabexnuv. Sati-Ashtoreth is the Queen in the "Fire" set of *Enochian Chess* whilst Shooeu-tha-ist is the Castle in the "Water" set, and Yog-Sothoth surely is an adaption of the god-name, Sothis.

The final connection between the *Necronomicon*, the Golden Dawn and *Enochian Chess* could well be the familiarity with the work of Dr. John Dee, founder of the Enochian System of Magic on which the Golden Dawn is largely based, and mentioned by HPL in his "History & Chronology of the Necronomicon", as a one-time translator of this grimoire.

CTHULHOID NOTICE

Has any reader any information on, or access to a copy of the movie ZOMBIE TERROR? If so please get in touch with the editor at the usual address. Does this film exist? Does your video outlet stock it? Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Foxflesh

by D.F. Lewis

I must tell you of the time that I first came to the Clockhouse Mount — a year last Spring, I think it was, friend. Do you know the place? Yes, it's in the outer South London suberbs, in Surrey really, but you have to climb along a very long hill out of Cullesdon and when you get there, you see the Green, fronting a run-down parade of shops and, further over, the "Pail of Water". Mrs. Dobb, the landlady of the Pail, she knows all the gossip of the Mount. About the Sawdusts of Number 4 Rich Land: Jackie Sawdust once blew his nose, you know, in public view, he blew it so hard that he just stared into his handkerchief not knowing it was his brain wriggling there, he stared just a few moments, yep, before he dropped down dead. About the Clerkes of Long Land: their younger son was levanted by the Surrey press gangs for labour in far off spice fields. About the losers and the winners of the terrible family feuds. About this and about that...

There is a golf-course on one side, some other cul-de-sacs leading to small-holdings and desolate fields of staring horses, tangled woods and deadfalls, overgrown bomb-holes and the rusty discards of shortly forgotten squabbles. You know, they say that the clouds sawg and belly heavier over the council roofs of Clockhouse Mount ... and, as I plodded up, that day, in the hope of my first homely tankard at the Pail, large drops spattered from a previously clear sky. Even at noon, dusk was gathering itself and some laggard golfers were standing along the side of the road holding their clubs like spears, making funny faces beneath their tartan berets and wriggling their chequered trousers as if in some crazy fashion show. They would soon be off, no doubt, before the light had finally disappeared.

I looked across at the downbeat parade and saw that the shops had shut, not for lunch as I had thought, but because I, a stranger, had loomed up from Cullesdon and they feared what they considered to be my unwholesome custom. I shivered for had the Pail, too, locked its lounge and saloon doors? The locals were inside, apparently persuading Mrs. Dobb to let them have further illicit flagons of the home-made brew, as I forced an entry through an unoiled latch-door. The bobbled heads looked up, scowls muttering across their faces, and one signalled for me to sheer off.

"Dear Sackalive!" cried Mrs. Dobb, from behind the bar, a friendlier aspect indeed appearing to fleet across her countenance. "I didn't think you'd make it".

"By Cock!" I replied, banging my feet on the floor, "That was a long walk up from the town".

Meantime the locals gathered closer to me and one even fingered my turn-ups in some strange rite of inspection. I looked at the posters and the customary wall-scrawl, to see if this was indeed the day of the darts match that I had been promised. But, no — imagine my despondency, when I saw incomprehensible messages pertaining to a Wicca Meet, destined for that very night ... and further bills bearing such things I cannot now spell — Cuthloo, Shib-Shubbing in the snug, Yogger-Nogging in the saloon and, what was it, an outing at the weekend to the Goat of a Thousand Young for a turdle-eating competition.

I skipped pretty niftily from the pub, for, as they say, you shouldn't turn a heavy stone if something's moving it from underneath.

I ran ... but it was difficult, for what I had thought originally to be rain was in fact now great bulbs of bursting liquid cascading from, not clouds, but shifting, floating monsters in the sky. They extended and retracted, in turn, long arms of blackness, from several interlocked central bodies and, if I were religious, the nearest I could get to describing them would be a hell's brood, an overnourished confluxion of sky and foxflesh betokening the fall of old disgraced gods ... and several smaller versions were creeping over the brims of council roofs...

I ran ... but golfers and pub locals surrounded me. One, of the name Tokkmaster Clerke, as he later told me, wielded a massive rutted file, its frightful crenellations glinting in the flashing of the wings in the sky. I was held fast by one whose nose dripped as Tokkmaster moved the file across my skull. At first, my hair fell away in lumps and dropped to the ground, followed by my skin. He grated it up and down, scratched, sawed, and ground. I could feel the hideous vibrations, reverberations stunning and splitting my head. My skull scrunched. My teeth were on edge, as the grating continued, as he honed my bone. The file stropped and serrated my pure white skull. It ground and rasped. Against the grain. Gashed and scored. Etched and furrowed. Rutted. Fretted and chafed. Scubbed and gnawed. Eroded and Kneaded...

* * * *

I ill recall most of that but I live now with the Sawdusts of Clockhouse Mount, and they call me Jackie... They make me worship the great old gods of the Surrey Badlands and the Southern Mysteries... The top of my head is like the skin of cold stew, so I now always have to wear a hat: Mrs. Dobb made it, kindly, out of vinegar & brown paper... and the filing Clerke, he says he's my pal now.

R'LYEH REVIEWS

believe this to be the most finely illustrated of all the Workshop *Call of Cthulhu* packages so far.
A nice addition to the Cthulhoid range, which all Keepers should own.

CEREBRETRON

Issue No.3. Edited by Alex Bardy. A5 format 58pp plus cover. Price 75p. Available from Alex Bardy, 28B Gladsmuir Road, Archway, London N19 3JX.

#3 of Alex Bardy's sci-fi fanzine, takes a break from its aforementioned theme to tackle the worlds of Lovecraft, sporting a fine cover by regular *Crypt of Cthulhu* and Necronomicon Press artist, Robert Knox. Amongst the eldritch horrors are articles by several *Dagon* regulars, which all provide some excellent reading. "You'll Mythos When We're Gone" by Peter Jeffery gives a brief outline to Lovecraft's development of the Cthulhu Mythos, intended as an introduction for the magazine's regular readers, but which is still worth a glance from readers who already know their HPL. This is followed by "Shadow Over Science" wherein Peter casts a critical eye over Lovecraft's thoughts on science fiction and shows how the author embroidered sci-fi themes into several tales. "The Return of the Dark Lady" is a fine scenario from S. J. Hatherley which combines elements of the RPG, *Traveller*, and places them in the Dreamlands setting. Though the piece probably resembles several Dreamlands scenarios that have been published in Chaosium's *Dreamlands* supplement, it still holds a few original ideas, which could prove useful for Keepers unfamiliar with the boxed set. "The Dreamlands" forms an article by Garrie Hall and the editor, which covers the Lovecraftian setting in further detail, it provides a useful reference article for players of the game or readers who, again, don't own the Chaosium package, but sadly doesn't cover any new ground.
Fiction is served by Bob Price's "Deprogrammer" a sci-fi tale and D.F. Lewis's "Seven Miles to Kidwelly". I must confess to a strong affection for Des's tales – all of which feature a common locale and community — If you enjoy "Foxflesh" in this issue of *Dagon*, you'll have fun with this piece too!
All in all, a very entertaining read which all *Dagon* readers should send off for, pronto!

The Red Brain's Trust

All of you who fuel the ravings of the Red Brain with your questions should note that the Brain is about to be removed from its present lurking-place. I shall be moving house, presumably some time this summer. However, at the time of writing, the house on Church Avenue has only just been placed on the market and it is, as yet, unclear when the move will take place. Further details will, hopefully, appear in a future issue of *Dagon*.

There will be no "Red Brain's Trust" in *Dagon #18*, but I hope to return with the usual assaults on the sanity of the readership in *Dagon #19*.

I have attempted to put out some feelers on the possible future direction of this column but have not, so far, received many suggestions. One thing that has been put forward is that, when refering to HPL's *Selected Letters* I should provide the date of the letters rather than the page references. I am not happy about dropping page references altogether as they are likely to prove useful to any scholar who wishes to follow up one of my trains of thought. However, the point is taken that the dates of the letters would be of more interest to most readers. In two recent articles I have provided dates in the body of the text, with page references relegated to footnotes. (These two articles are "The Shadow Over Science" due to appear in issue 3 of Alex Bardy's *Cerebretron* and "Wild Men of the Hills" which should be in issue 4 of Garrie Hall's *Tales After Dark*). I do not wish to encumber "The Red Brain's Trust" with footnotes, however, and will try the experiment of including both page references and dates in the body of the text.

The question of Lovecraft's musical connections having been given some space in this column, Mark Valentine has drawn my attention to the work of a group called The Combat Angels. While there seems to be nothing directly Lovecraftian in their work, their songs such as "Dark Parade", "The Empty House" (itself the title of an Algernon Blackwood story and collection) and "The Goat of the West" suggest a weird fiction preoccupation. They have released an L.P. called *Sleep No More* the title of which has previously served as that of L.T.C. Rolt's collected macabre stories, and also an August Derleth anthology. (Rolt's stories, especially, deserve more attention than they have received). Whether The Combat Angels have taken the title from either of these books is not at all clear. It is actually a quotation from MacBeth and they might have taken it directly from Shakespeare, as, I'm sure, both Rolt and Derleth did... Another couple of records with weird fiction connections that occur ro me are *Nosferatu* by Hugh Cornwell and Robert Williams, and Harry Nilsson's "Son of Schmilsson. Then, of course, there's *The Rocky Horror Show*. And Edgar Allan Poe must, by now, be well represented in music — The Beatles mentioned his name in "I am the Walrus" and included his picture on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.... It may be that weird connections in music is too large a topic to cover at less than book length.

In *Dagon #16* I attempted to date, from internal evidence, the photograph of Lovecraft used repeatedly in Chaosium publications. I have received a letter from Laurence Cornford of Sheffield who, by a series of clever arguments, pins the date down to "after 1931 and probably before 1934". His reasoning is proved correct by a booklet kindly forwarded to me by its author, R. Alain Everts, *Lovecraft in Florida — A Photographic Record*. Chaosium's picture is one of three known photos of HPL taken by Lucius Beecher Truesdell, a professional photographer of Deland, Florida. Lovecraft's session with Truesdell took place during Lovecraft's 1934 visit to Robert H. Barlow and his family. He arrived at the Barlow cabin on 2nd May and departed on 21st June, so that the three photographs

may be dated to May-June 1934. Truesdell retired in 1940, leaving his negatives (some 20,000 of them) with his assistant. No one requested a negative during the next quarter of a century, so the assistant destroyed the negatives in 1965. Truesdell himself died in 1974, aged 100, someone showed him one of his portraits of Lovecraft towards the end of his long life, but he could not recall his most famous sitter.

I have several new questions to hand, but will postpone answering all but one, at least until *Dagon #19*.

MIKE MASON of Loughborough has written to ask is any of the Mythos writers, other than Lovecraft, were knowledgable in occult matters. He remarks: "I would say Derleth must have come across the occult in some way or fashion sometime in his life". It is hard not to agree. August Derleth was, for many years, both the head of Arkham House and one of the most prominent of all editors of horror anthologies. It would be little short of miraculous if more than one person didn't send him a manuscript relating to the genuine occult. How much attention Derleth paid to such submissions is quite another matter. Some anthologists – the name Peter Haining springs readily to mind – have included such things in their compilations of the macabre, but I cannot recall seeing anything of the sort in one of Derleth's anthologies or an Arkham House book. Neither have I noticed, in Derleth's own work, much indeptness to lore more esoteric than that provided by well known authors of weird fiction, plus a dash of John Milton, perhaps.

However, Derleth's exposure to occult material may have started as early as 1933 when Lovecraft passed Derleth's address on to the member of his circle who, apparently, was most interested in such things – William Lumley. (Lumley's name is best known as the "author" of Lovecraft's "revision" story "The Diary of Alonzo Typer"). In a letter he wrote to Clark Ashton Smith on October 3rd, 1933 Lovecraft says: "I've given Lumley Comte d' Erlette's address in case he doesn't know it already..." (*Selected Letters IV* p.279) – Lovecraft's most frequent fanciful name for Derleth being that of the author of *Cultes des Goules*. In the same letter, Lovecraft deals with Lumley's occult interests at some length, describing his attitude as: "a combination of priceless credulity and gorgeous Munchausenism" (ibid). That not all of Lumley's occult material was genuine becomes increasingly clear as Lovecraft continues: "his air of familiarity with such works as the arcana of Paracelsus, Hermes Trismegistrus, Albertus Magnus, Appollonius of Tyana, Eibon, Von Junzt and Abdul Alhazred. He says he has witnessed monstrous rites in deserted cities, has slept in pre-human ruins and awakened 20 years older, has seen strange elemental spirits in all lands (including Buffalo, N.Y. – where he frequently visits a haunted valley and sees a white, misty Presence)..." (ibid)... HPL concludes that "unknown and primordial tongues are as easy to Bill as high school Latin to you and me!" (ibid p.271) and that "His own sorceries, I judge, are of somewhat modest kind; though he has had very strange and marvellous results from clay images and from certain cryptical incantations." (ibid). Perhaps most curious of all, William Lumley may have been one of the first to hold that strange delusion of some recent occultists that there was "something in" the Cthulhu Mythos. Returning to Lovecraft's letter: "He is firmly convinced that all our gang – you, Two-Gun Bob, Sonny Belknap, Grandpa E'ch-Pi-El, and the rest – are genuine agents of unseen Powers ... We may *think* we are writing fiction, and may even (absurd thought!) disbelieve what we write, but at the bottom we are telling the truth in spite of ourselves – serving unwittingly as mouthpieces of Tsathoggua, Crom, Cthulhu, and other pleasand Outside gentry ... he can tell me more about 'em than I know myself!" (ibid). All of this sounds very much like a precursor of some strange outgrowths of modern occultism as Anton LaVey's "Ceremony of the Nine Angles" and "The Call to Cthulhu" both included in *The Satanic Rituals* by Anton LaVey (Avon Books, 1972 pp.175-201).

All of this raises several difficulties in answering a question like this. For one thing, there is some problem in defining exactly what we mean by a Mythos author. William Lumley's "The Diary of Alonzo Typer" is certainly a Mythos story – but how far is Lumley the author of it, and to what extent may we say that it is Lovecraft's own work? The mention of Anton LaVey will serve to increase perplexity in this regard. Mr. LaVey is, of course, a prominent figure in the occult and head of the Church of Satan. But in so far as he has produced Cthulhoid rituals we may also regard him as a Mythos author, one difference between LaVey and the general run of Mythos authors being that he does not present his material as being fiction. So what, precisely, do we mean by a Mythos author? And, if it comes to that – what exactly is meant by the genuine occult? The list of authors, with whose work Lovecraft says that Lumley was familiar, included both real authors to whom actual occult books have been attributed, such as Albertus Magnus, and entirely fictional names invented by Lovecraft and his friends. How far were Lumley's occult learnings bogus and how far based upon traditional (folklore) sources? Where, indeed, is the line to be drawn between the two? Anton LaVey's work shows the same perplexing combination of folklore and (modern) fiction, The serious student of beliefs will be careful to distinguish the sources of various strands of belief – ancient religion, traditional folklore, medieval mysticism, modern weird fiction etc., but the occultist will not do so. Occultists are apt to draw upon an eclectic mass of material, from whatever sources they can find, and embellish the result with whatever fancies their imaginations can add. The result strains, to its limit, the traditional library distinction between fiction and non-fiction. In the end we will probably have to conclude that the difference lies in the "genuine" occult material purporting to relate to what happens in the real world, while weird fiction claims to have no basis in fact. (Even this may need to be more carefully restated when we consider such oddities as Dennis Wheatley's black magic stories which purport to be fiction based on fact...) So we may conclude, that exactly the same account could be regarded as either fiction or non-fiction depending on what claims the author wants to make for it.

These murky areas aside, there are a number of distinctions which we ought to be careful to make. In the first place we should distinguish the occult from supernatural belief in general. At its most respectable, supernatural belief embraces religion; it also includes a whole series of folklore beliefs ranging from belief in fairies to such night frights as ghosts and vampires; there are a great variety of superstitions; and the area of the occult. In Lovecraft's case there is little need to make these distinctions, as he believed in none of this at all. The supernatural beliefs of other writers can be a lot more complex. Lovecraft seems to have written weird fiction because he believed so completely in the tyranny of natural law (from which he sometimes liked to escape). Others have exactly the opposite motivation – H. Russell Wakefield, for example, wrote: "Unless I believed that there *are* inexplicable phenomena in the world, marshalled under the generic term 'psychic', I should never have bothered to write a single ghost story". ("Why I Write Ghost Stories" included in his collection *The Clock Strikes 12*). But, of course, Wakefield's belief in ghostly happenings does not imply that he gave any credence to what we would normally call the occult. One may note that Wakefield wrote ghost stories rather than Mythos stories, and one might wonder whether an author who believed in ghosts or the occult would be more likely to write of ghostly or occult phenomena than make use of Lovecraft's artificial mythology. Neither would an author's belief in some facet of the occult imply that they swallowed everything which we might term occult. Indeed, it is not easy to pin down precisely what does and what does not form part of the occult. Black magic certainly seems to belong in this category. But what about, say, astrology? Some would say that it belongs in the realm of the occult, others that it is a science or pseudo-science. Still others may see it

as a piece of harmless fun. What about alternative medicine? Or dousing?

We should also be careful to distinguish between knowledge and belief in the occult. Some might think that the less one knows about the subject, the easier it is to believe in it! Neither belief in, nor knowledge of, the occult imply involvement with it; and contact with the occult is something else again — the occult can come to people who don't seek it.

For many members of the Lovecraft circle, gaining familiarity with the occult would have been much easier said than done. When one thinks of Robert E. Howard in Cross Plains, Texas and Clark Ashton Smith in Auburn, California, it is hard to imagine how they could have received any knowledge of the occult, except through the post. While, in former times, witch cults may have belonged to remote rural areas — in the twentieth century the occult tends to be an urban phenomenon. Frank Belknap Long, a New Yorker, may have been the best placed of HPL's friends for gleaning occult material. That he did not do so is evidenced by the lack of occult references in his fiction, everything may one gather of his character, and the fact that while Lovecraft (in his letters) chided Mr. Long over various matters, involvement with the occult is not amongst them. It is hard to believe that Robert Bloch encountered the occult in any shape or form during Lovecraft's lifetime, or the period in which he composed his Mythos stories. Subsequently, as a Hollywood script writer associated with the macabre, it is hard to believe that he had no contact with the occult, but not, I would think, any active involvement with it. As to more modern writers of Mythos stories, they surely must be left to speak for themselves as to whether they have knowledge of, belief in, or involvement with the occult. It seems doubtful whether their occult connections would amount to much, however.

Though not Mythos writers, at least two members of the Lovecraft circle had a considerable interest in astrology. One was Virgil Finlay whose illustrations went some way to shape the Mythos, and the other was E. Hoffman Price. Price was a somewhat pivotal member of the Lovecraft circle — he was the only member to meet all three of the *Weird Tales* "Musketeers" — HPL, Clark Ashton Smith and Robert E. Howard. He wrote a great deal of unjustly neglected weird fiction, but the nearest he seems to have come to writing a Mythos story was "The Lord of Illusion" - the tale which Lovecraft re-wrote as "Through the Gates of the Silver Key". He has also written on the subject of astrology including studies of the horoscopes of Robert E. Howard (serialised in the first two issues of *Whispers*) and Lovecraft (appeared in Meade and Penny Frierson's *HPL*). Price evidently mentioned astrology when writing to Lovecraft for, in a letter to Price dated February 15th, 1933, HPL remarks "...the casting of horoscopes never having been included among my ambitions. If I ever employ any astrological lore in stories, I shall most gratefully call on you for realistic detail." (*Selected Letters IV* pp.153-4). Mildly put, considering how thoroughly Lovecraft despised astrology! A few days later, on February 18th, 1933, Lovecraft wrote to Clark Ashton Smith that: "Price has dug up another cycle of actual folklore involving an allegedly primordial thing called *The Book of Dzyan*..." (*Selected Letters IV* p.155). This reference to *The Book of Dzyan* is interesting in at least two ways. In the first place it demonstrates that Price delved, at least to a slight extent, into theosophy. Still more illuminating, perhaps, is that Lovecraft is summarising to Smith what Price has told him, evidently he thinks that Clark Ashton Smith will know nothing of this. This goes some way to confirm the conjecture that Clark Ashton Smith's occult knowledge was slight and largely received throught the post.

The Things from Outside willing, this column will return in *Dagon #19*. To echo John Ebden, if you have been, thankyou for reading.

Ba'albek

Great Archaeological Sites: The Truths

From Professor Simon Davreu; forwarded by Richard Watts

This Earth of ours has seen many ages and civilisations pass, each with its own gods. The horror of it all is, that time and time again, the gods themselves are the same; only the names have changed! My colleagues laugh at my findings, and call me paranoid. But I know! Jupiter, Zeus, Odin, all date back to an earlier time. At one time I deluded myself into thinking that the worship of the Other Gods was long dead, lost in the enshrouding mists of time. But then I went to windswept Ba'albek. God in Heaven, now I know! And worst of all, noone will listen. My fellow scientists seek to part the mists with their research, but they do not know *what they will see!*

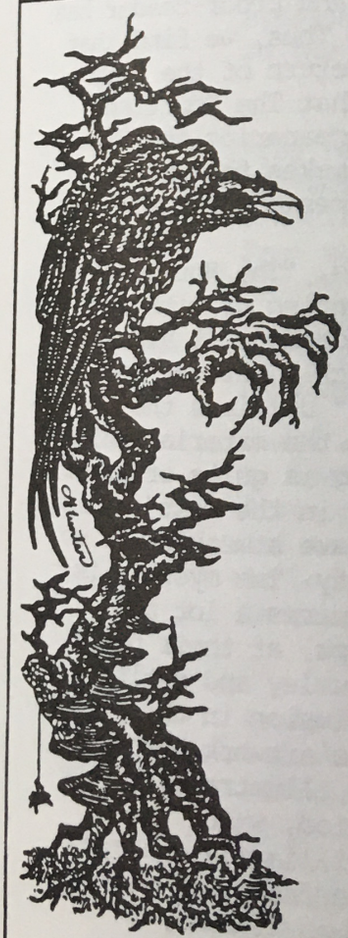
But I digress. Before I warn you, before you will believe, I must present the facts. Deep in the arid heartlands of Labanon, some 70 kilometres east of Beirut, lie the desolate ruins of the temple of Ba'albek. For the most part, it is a pitifully young site, as the cosmic scheme of things go, built by the Romans, as a place of worship dedicated to Jupiter, the King of the Gods, and Venus, Goddess of Love. When I arrived at the site, Ba'albek was a majestic sight to behold. The gentle light of evening stained the marble pillars a delicate pink, and cast long shadows across the remains of the once-bustling forum. That was when I saw it, long and dark, silhouetted against the ruddy disc of the setting sun. What had caught my eye was a section of the enclosure; the Trithilion as it is called; a wall formed of three hewn blocks of stone. Taken by themselves, they would be be nothing, were it not for their sheer, unsettling size. Each block weighs some *750 tonnes!* Just to carve and drag such gigantic stones into place would have been an amazing feat of construction. The wonder of it all, is that the three individual blocks of the Trithilion have been elevated several metres, to rest upon far smaller stones. Another block, this one measuring four by four metres in diameter and some twenty one metres in height and weighing at least 1000 tonnes, lies unused in a quarry nearby. Who it was that chiselled these strange cyclopean stones remains a mystery. The Romans did not build the Trithilion, for their buildings, (destroyed by an earthquake in 1759) lie tumbled and broken atop these megalithic stones. Nay, the immense blocks date back far earlier. I shudder when I think of the immensity of time that these stones have seen, and even more when I consider *who lifted them*. Ancient Arabic writings, themselves centuries old, can tell us little, save half-remembered tales of the first temple, built on the site soon after the Flood, at the command of the legendary "King Nimrod", by a "tribe of giants".

Seeing these stones led to me spending some time at Ba'albek, for I was determined to unravel the riddle of who it was that built the site. The question proved to be far harder to solve than I had at first thought. *What* was worshipped there, however, proved far easier. As I have already mentioned, the Roman temple was sacred to Jupiter and Venus. But they were merely tacked onto an earlier religion, in an attempt to seduce the natives away from their own dieties, and turn them to the new Roman Gods. The very name gives it away. Ba'albek. Ba'al; together with his consort Asherah/Astarte.

Like many gods, Ba'al was a Master of the Storm and Winter Rain. His very name was too sacred to be spoken; indeed, it was only known to the High Priests. *Ba'al* is merely a pseudonym. Upon discovering this I was struck by a terrible thought. The Daemon Sultan has a secret name, too. Could *Ba'al* and that evil thing be one and the same? Horrified by the thought, I continued my investigations. Each day I uncovered more and more, which led me to suspect that, vile as the idea may

seem, Ba'albek may once have been a centre of worship to aberrant and diabolical gods. Was not Asherah a fertility goddess, whose statues depicted her with multiple breasts hanging pendulously from her chest? The coincidences grew too frightening to contemplate, and so I took refuge in my Bible. But even there I found references to the horrors I was unearthing! In the Second Book of Kings, Chapter 17, Verse 10, I found the following: "On all the hills and under every shady tree they put up stone pillars and images of Asherah..." and in verse 16: "... they also made an image of the goddess Asherah, worshipped the stars, and served the god Ba'al". The horrors grew too great for my mind. I was determined, once and for all, to discover who, or what, these gods were. Until now I had resolved not to investigate the sinuous tunnels beneath Ba'albek. Taking my lantern, I set off to explore them.

Merciful God! I shall never sleep peacefully again! Where once my ideas were tenuous, now they were solid fact. I wish I did not have to reveal the truth, but I must, lest my colleagues shatter the veil that lies between the world and madness. Ba'al *is* the Sultan! Asherah/Astarte *is* the Black Goat! Proof of this I found, and much more. But it was not the obscene carvings of tentacled monstrosities that I saw in the archeronotic gulfs that twist beneath Ba'albek, that caused me to lose my lantern or my sanity; sending me fleeing, gibbering into the darkness. Nay, not the statues, not even the blood-stained altars dedicated to foul and monstrous gods from other spheres. No, it was something much simpler; merely the hissing voice that asked me *if I had come to worship!*



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R'lyeh Reviews

GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

Published by Games Workshop Ltd. Compiled by Pete Tamlyn. 80pp plus cover. £5.95.

This long awaited supplement for British investigations for *Call of Cthulhu* is beautifully presented and upto the standards of Workshop's last offerings in the genre. Pete Tamlyn has put together a useful package which tells Keepers all the information they might need to know concerning Britain of the 20's. Useful topics include history and background notes to major celebrities of the era, sections detailing the British character, social life, communications, crime & punishment, entertainment, the public health service, money and prices, and a history of Britain spanning the decade in detail. Amongst the more outre articles is a rather well presented piece on the occult, including short summaries of such notables as Aleister Crowley, wisely focusing on his life following his split from the Golden Dawn; Harry Price, a professional ghost hunter from the period as well as outlines of various secret societies, witchcraft revival and The Society of Physical Research. There is also a section entitled "Fortean and Disasters Timeline" which presents a year-by-year listing of weird events which will provide the Keeper with plenty of source material for scenario outlines.

My favourite piece amongst the factual history notes is a section on Archaeology by regular *White Dwarf* Cthulhoid writer, Graeme Davis, which gives notes and reference points for most major British "digs" as well as providing a useful history of excavations by British archaeologists abroad.

"Britain in the Mythos" presents us with a map of the country upon which are placed key numbers which correspond with a listing of tales and scenarios containing Mythos activity. Unfortunately, the paste-up artist and proof-reader has done a terrible job and many areas are incorrectly numbered. Thus, we find that Cornwall notable for Brian Lumley's Seaham and Newquay in "Return of the Deep Ones" lies somewhere in the Midlands and, more alarmingly, that The Scottish Highlands used for the settings of several *Call of Cthulhu* sceanarios and "The House of the Temple" lie in East Anglia. This silly mistake makes the whole map quite ridiculous, which is a pity since Peter Jeffery's research on the piece is very thorough indeed.

The second part of the book presents us with three scenarios, "The Horror of the Glen" by Pete Tamlyn is my favourite of the bunch, presenting us with an extremely well thought out plot and a heavily oppressive atmosphere. I also enjoyed Pete's incorporation of new Mythos monstrosities which I believe he handled very well. Peter Jeffery's "The Shadow Over Darkbank" utilises the theme of the author's favorite pastime — waterways — and so the material which Peter provides us with is accurately detailed and the setting is quite original for a Mythos adventure. Graeme Davis supplies us with "Death in the Post" a nice little scenario involving a strange papyrus which seems to have something to do with the deaths of several well-known members of the community. The mystery is quite easy to solve, however the thwarting of the menace requires a lot more cunning from the player as the investigators may find, perhaps, at their peril.

The supplement is rounded off with a Mythos tale by Brian Lumley and entitled "The Running Man", which has been specially prepared for inclusion in the project.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the whole package is the artwork both in terms of design and execution. The factual history notes are illustrated by the use of photographs taken from a Harrods catalogue of the period, which lend a very atmospheric air to the book. The three scenarios are brilliantly conveyed by artist Martin McKenna, who, as regular readers know, is perfectly at ease with horrific material. Together with the striking cover by Lee Gibbons, I

In February 1968, when Brian Lumley had been corresponding with August Derleth at Arkham House for something like three or four months — which is to say he'd written only a handful of his early tales — Brian produced a story in sonnet form called "The Shadow Man". He recalls sending it to Derleth, and nothing else about it.

Then in 1985 when Leigh Blackmore was compiling Lumley's most complete bibliography in recent years, he mentioned "The Shadow Man" as having appeared in a fanzine entitled *The HPL Supplement*. This last Christmas, almost nineteen years since Lumley last saw it, Blackmore sent him a photocopy.

Brian has kindly passed the piece on to me, for a long overdue reprinting of a vintage "story"...

Shadow Man

by Brian Lumley

Once while wandering through dank midnight streets
And pausing in an ill-lit thoroughfare
Where all about seemed thick with hell's efreets,
I felt upon my back a sudden stare;
A glance so piercing I was filled with dread,
That someone could direct so vile a glare
Upon my person, so I turned my head
And saw, high in a garret, someone there.

"I seek a room", I called, "It grows so late,
Would you allow me, sir, to share your board
Tonight the very air seems filled with hate —
It's certainly no night to be abroad".
He beckoned me to climb in wormy gloom
To the high turrets of his garret room.

* * * *

"You're welcome", came the whisper through the door,
"To share my room — though first I must explain —
I dwell in darkness for my eyes are sore
From some strange photophobia's morbid pain.
Before you enter — douse the landing light
And then I'll bid you welcome to my room;
For I swear, sir, I could not bear the sight
Of that dread brightness, I who dwell in gloom".

I did as bade and as the door swung wide
My host stood in the doorway silhouetted,
I stepped within — and knew that he had lied —
And nameless fear at my innards fretted.
He led me to a stool and then sat where
He once more might observe the thoroughfare.

* * * *

Against the wall I rested my tired frame
And then, unthinking, filled my rose-wood bowl,
Unconsciously, I swear, I struck the flame
Which thrust the shadows back in that dark hole.
My host, he screamed and struck aside my hand
And cursed that he had dared take me in,
Knowing that I now must understand
The horrifying state which he was in.

Frozen in awe I sat as he explained
In frenzied speech the terror I had seen,
How from his being some warlock had drained
An integer of what he once had been.
Aloud then, in that room, I sat and prayed —
My flaring match had shown he cast no shade!

* * * *

My unbelieving ears heard his tale
Of how within that city there did dwell
Somewhere a man who'd seen behind the veil
And learned the secrets of a nameless hell.
He told of how this being owned a tome,
Which bore no word but carried on each leaf
A shadow-blot whose indigenous home
Was some poor recluse driven thus to grief.

"The shadow is the very soul, my friend,
Without it man is merely a sad shell;
I curse that fiend who brought me to this end —
That in eternal darkness I must dwell.
I sit here with my rifle through each day
And pray that he might once more pass my way".

* * * *

Then, as he finished speaking, he did take
Down from the wall a cared weapon which
He sighted from the window 'ere he spake,
And suddenly his whispering voice grew rich:
"He comes, I know it, stalking through the night,
I sense him as for years I've dreamed I would;
And I have been appointed to put right
The wrongs he's done — he'll pay his depts in blood".

I could not move — he tensed and aimed his shot,
but not into the darkened street below;
There came a deafening blast — and then a blot
Of something dark across the floor did flow.
As sudden moonlight came I gibbering fled —
The spreading shadow at his feet was red!

Earthquakes are *not* predictable. They do *not* occur in straight lines, or travel progressively across continents and under oceans . . . do they?

Something is stirring in the earth —
and it's coming this way!

KEEP WATCHING THIS SPACE!

BLACK MAIL

Dave Carson, London. We read the copy of *Dagon #16*, wot we received and would like to inform you that if there's anny more of dis sort of fing (ie. piss taking) my ~~assocat~~ ~~asocci~~ mates will come rahnd an saw your face off. And tell dat geezer H. P. LUDDITE 'es on our list too.
Leave it aht mate. I nofink ~~seared~~ sacred? Bring dat geezer Ford back so we can read some well intelectuale articules abaht fings wiv tentacules. Do we make ourselves clear? P.S. Gaiman is a marked man....

Which might go someway to explain why Dave Carson sticks to drawing eldritch horrors and doesn't write about them...

Mark Samuels, Sydenham. I must protest *most* strongly at this *crass* so called 'humour' issue of *Dagon*. The master — Lovecraft — must not be treated so lightly, rather a whole issue must be given over to the *serious* subject of Derleth bashing. I myself am organising a bonfire of all the (spit!) 'posthumous collaborations' and would invite fellow purists to ignore Guy Fawkes on Nov 5th and instead make a stuffed old Augie on 24th Feb. I also stock Augie 'voodoo dolls' if anyone's interested. No wait!! What's this? agghh! Lovecraftian purists breaking through the window! I was only joking! Aghhhh! Iā! Iā! Iā! Shub-Randy Alain Everts fhtagn!!!

Neil Gaiman, East Grinstead. Nice to see "I Cthulhu" in print at last: the only other Lovecraftian article I plan on doing at some point is annotating some correspondence that has come into my hands relatively mysteriously. Which is to say, it is not generally known that the H.P. Lovecraft letters we know and love are incomplete in one important respect.
In the late twenties and early thirties a young English writer — who, like Lovecraft, thought little of writing twenty thousand word letters — was in New York, working on his own books and writing the librettos to musicals.
That Lovecraft, a devoted anglophile, was a fan of the man's work is unsurprising. That P.G. Wodehouse was a fan of *Weird tales* is perhaps more so. How their lengthy correspondence got into my grubby little hands I do not wish to go into at this point. Suffice it to say that I possess not only their only collaborative novel (alternatively titled *The What Ho! On the Threshold* and *It's the Call of Cthulhu, Jeeves*) but also fragments of their musical, *Necronomicon Summer*, in which the heroine is called upon to sing those immortal lines:

I may be just a bird in a gilded cage
A captive like a parakeet or dove,
But when a maiden meets a giant lipophage
Her heart gets chewed and broken, like that old adage...
— I'm just a fool who
Thought that Cthulhu
Could fall in love!

The similarities between the two authors — not only in names, but also in biography, both of them having been brought up by aunts for example (one of a legion of similarities) leads one to ponder why the collaborations were a failure and covered up by both men, and why they conducted their work together in such secrecy. Certainly the novel throws a fascinating light on both their obsessions (the sequence in which Aunt Agatha is revealed to be Nyarlathotep, and the Wooster-Psmith expedition to the thrice accursed plains of Leng, enlivened by their running battle over Bertie Wooster's bow-tie, spring to mind immediately).
When it is fit for publication; when copyright is cleared; and when the sig-

nificant question of whether these are the Wodehouse-Lovecraft Letters, or the Lovecraft-Wodehouse Letters (or whether, as been suggested, one should compromise into, for example, the Lovehouse-Wodecraft Letters) has been fully sorted out: then I can assure you that your publication shall be the first to know about it.

Crypt of Cthulhu, E&O *and* Lovecraft Studies *eat your hearts out.....*

Mark Ryan, Hants. After recently receiving *#16* of your normally excellent publication *Dagon*, I felt that I had to put pen to paper. Although most of the artwork was up to its usual high standard and the layout was impeccable, the actual literary content was sub-standard. The Cthulhu Mythos has no place for humour in the form shown here. Some people will possibly disagree with this, but as far as I am concerned any humour should be in small amounts and not engulf practically a whole issue. To be honest I object paying 85p for such a publication so please — no more like this.

Sorry Mark, no doubt you'll be pleased to know that things change with this issue you won't be paying 85p "for such a publication" in the future, as I've put the cover price up another shilling!

Lyoyd Brady, Leopold, Victoria, Australia. Issue 16 was much appreciated. Although lengthy discussions on the pronounciation of "Cthulhu", and heated argumnts on what constitutes the Mythos are very interesting, it is good not to lose sight of the fact that the stories, and especially the RPG, are mostly about "good, clean, honest fun".

"Shoggoth Street", though, was a bit close to reality for me. You wouldn't believe the ignorance and stupidity shown by some of my players in ignoring, dismissing, or totally failing to comprehend the most blatant of leads for their investigations.

It was nice to hear Big C's side of the story, too. I always thought him to be a rather misunderstood, depraved, tentacular, gluttonous monstrosity. And Mr. Petersen's ditty "Waltzing Cthulhu" had a grusomely pleasing ring to it.

Tom Zunder, Sheffield. An excellent issue, and well worth it, with some excellent pieces as "The Sinister Secret of Shoggoth Street" — an absolute classic! I keep wanting to repeat it over and over again, it's so funny. Humour is an excellent element of the Mythos and its fandom, it so beautifully reminds us of the essantial lunacy of the time, effort and money we spend on what is, essentially, a collection of melodramatic jokes about lethal porridge!

Mike D. Mason, Loughborough. "The Sinister Secret of Shoggoth Street" was hideously accurate in its description of the ultimate horror — an HPL rip-off! Who can forget immortal lines like, "Don't go in that house on Shoggoth Street, 'cos if you do, you'll get eaten." or even the enigmatic reference to "uncle fish face". I can only wait in anticipation for Mr. Lovecraftian-Steriotype's next fiendishly original piece of fiction!

Steve Hatherley, Sidmouth. I loved *#16*, my favourite so far. It is refreshing to see that *Dagon* isn't becoming a stuffy HPL publication. A good dose of humour is always welcome, in fact I would like something daft in every issue.

Chris Turnock, Gtr. Manchester. When I received *Dagon #16* I wasn't too sure about a humour issue but on contemplation it's quite a good idea since most of the original Mythos stories were just an in-joke amongst the Lovecraft circle. "Sinister Secret" was o.k. but I thought "I Cthulhu" was better since it didn't rely for its humour on the rather easy target of Lovecraft's style. Although, having said that, I think that most of those cliches are more likely to be found in pastiche stories by people like Derleth.

Chris Masters, *Melbourne*, *Australia*. H. P. Luddite's "Sinister Secret of Shogg-oth Street", and Neil Gaiman's "I Cthulhu" were both very enjoyable. Cthulhu, though does tend to babble on a bit, doesn't he? Still I suppose it's about time he/it/whatever was given the chance to speak and set some things straight once and for all. And as for Great Cthulhu being Dagon, phn'glui nnga'th ftgngnnn!!!

Brian Lumley, *Brixham*. The thing about LoCs to *Dagon* is this: one's liable to run out of superlatives! But I do believe you've done it yet again: this *does* appear to be your best yet. I mean, the contents may be a little bit dodgy, (Lovecraftian mickey-taking), but at the same time they're good. I found Bob Price's Crow limerick the cleverest of the bunch; I think he got this idea from Lin Carter, who did a similar thing for *Crypt of Cthulhu*.

Incidentally, on the subject of Little Bo Price: I'll try and enlarge upon what I said about Dagon, his not being a prototype of Cthulhu, that is. Now I realise that the story ("Dagon") takes place in the Pacific; that's the *main reason* I can't go along with old D being C. The only thing the narrator can make of what he's seen is to liken it to the Dagon god of the Bible. It is manlike, but has the scales and other apparatus of a fish — like a Creature From the Black Lagoon, but *gigantic!* Big enough to wrestle whales. Now this isn't Cthulhu, whose shape we know well. But it could be a similar species to the diety of the sea that the Philistines and others worshipped. His first thought is that these creatures are ... "merely the imaginary gods of some primitive fishing or sea-faring tribe; some tribe whose last descendant had perished eras before the first ancestor of the Piltdown or Neanderthal Man was born." later, when he speaks to a celebrated ethnologist, he tentatively mentions the legend of Dagon the Fish-God.

Maybe he intended that in the beginning there were many such creatures (he talks about "them") but that now they have died out and there remains just this one. Which could be why it grovels and howls so piteously at the base of the monolith its brothers once carved. I think it was a problem HPL himself had not resolved, but which he got straightened out at a later date. If he had wanted this to *be* the actual Mediterranean Dagon, he'd have situated the story there, in the Med. No, but it was one of the same order of beings, and so got tagged with "Dagon". The difference is that it had *flesh*, not protoplasm. And there were no tentacles, no wings, no flabby claws ... no Cthulhu likeness at all.

But to avoid any chance of later confusion, Lovecraft got a proper grip of the conception in "Shadow Over Innsmouth", where he had us all descended from the Dagon types. With this sort of blood in us, it doesn't take much for us to degen-erate into Deep Ones — that is, minions of Mother Hydra and Father Dagon, who in turn worship Cthulhu and the Great Old Ones. And *nowhere* in "Shadow" is Dagon confused with Cthulhu.

On the other hand, we could agree with Bob and say that "Shadow" was HPL's re-think: Dagon simply hadn't been strong enough, awesome enough, cosmic enough, and so he'd changed him into Cthulhu, and let the original Dagon play a subserv-ient role.

And on the *other* hand (three hands?) ... bollocks to it!

Mark Morrison, *Melbourne*, *Australia*. "Clan McMere" was yet another competent scen-ario about an insane coven of cultists, but I'm starting to wonder whether there have been too many of those for them to be all used without the players falling into a standard 'flush out the baddies' procedure, with success.

Tom Zunder, *Sheffield*. I thought "The Last of the Clan McMere" was an excellent scenario, at last a solo player and a scenario without the excess of monster #7. The fact that the threat is human, but that success isn't necessary made it excellently Lovecraftian.

C. N. Walker, Huddersfield. "The Last of the Clan McMere" — how come you have another great scenario from the mind of Mr. Bennison? Why are the attempts I make so poor in comparison, who is he in contact with? Is he, in fact, an Avatar of Nyarlathotep? Brill could we have some more of these please.

Steve Hatherley. Andy Bennison does it again... Lovely scenario. It suffered a little from the ghastly hiding-important-information-in-the-text-syndrome (practiced at its worst by *The Statue of the Sorcerer*). I really do like information to be presented by handouts. Failing that, brief descriptions that can be suitably embellished by the Keeper. Long passages that hide the salient facts infuriate me.

Neil Grant, Mid. Glam. "The Last of the Clan McMere" was an excellent scenario, if somewhat odd in layout — it is highly likely that the PC will miss all the events of the scenario until James has been killed, and will then have to face the creature alone — not easy for a not-particularly-powerful character. Still, I like single player scenarios, and hope to see more of them in the future.

Mike D. Mason. "Humour in the Haunter Trilogy" was an interesting article. When I read the three stories I found them to be one of the best group's of Mythos work I'd ever read. I think this is one of the best articles I've ever read in *Dagon* — keep it up!

Rik Shepherd, Cheshire. A quibble about your interesting piece on the Haunter Trilogy: hardly rib-ticklers, plot-wise, are they? I mean, the humour is basically a series of in-jokes on the writers names; the actual stories aren't funny. Someone who isn't aware that Blake is Bloch is hardly going to read "The Haunter of the Dark" and be impressed by HPL's wild and wacky sense of humour.

Ian Mundell, Wiltshire. The "Haunter" article was a good anchor to reality, showing that the originators of the Mythos didn't think their creation too sacred to mess around with. I think the works of Tolkien and Poe suffer through being pulled to bits by 'serious-minded' academics, seeing things that aren't really there.

(Continued on page 32)

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THIS ISSUE IS FOR

KARL GREENWOOD

Dagon #18/#19 is a double-issue and will be available from the end of July. The issue will focus on the work of horror master, T.E.D. KLEIN and will include contributions from Ramsey Campbell, Robert M. Price, Steve Mariconda, Peter Cannon, Mark Valentine, Peter Jeffery, S. T. Joshi, Mark Morrison, Dave Carson, Allen Koszowski and Martin McKenna. The issue will also feature an exclusive interview, biography and bibliography. And amongst the fiction will be the first printing of a chapter cut from Klein's novel *THE CEREMONIES* and "Rejection Slip" a short tale of terror from the award winning author himself.

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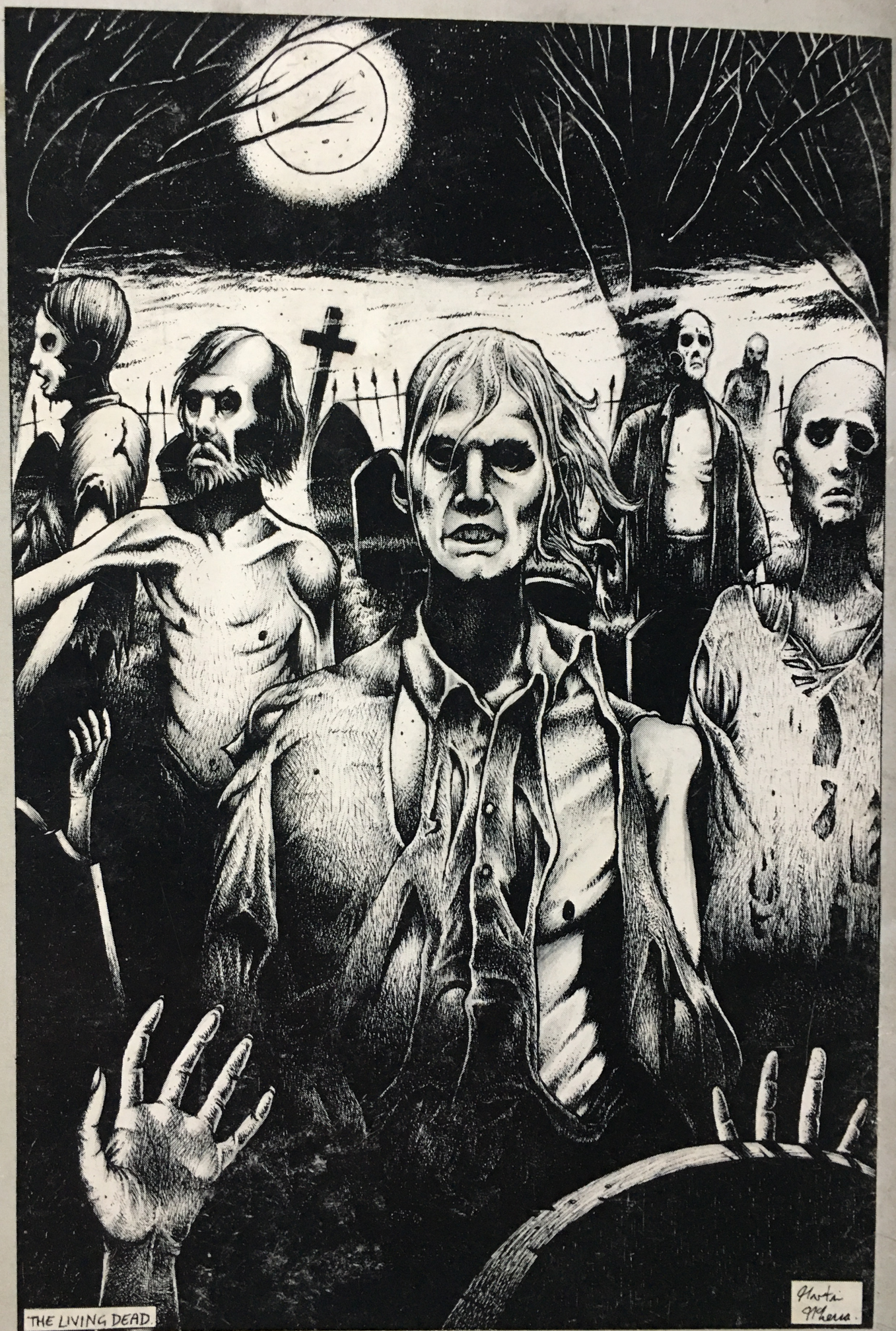
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